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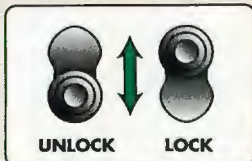
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FEBRUARY 1998

Vol. 23 No. 2



Yves Debay

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Carl Prine



courtesy Mechem

# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

## Looking For A Few Good Extremists

A bumper sticker at this year's SOF Expo said: "To Forgive Is Divine But It Isn't Marine Corps Policy." It is precisely that kind of traditional and resolute toughness that really upsets the sissies in the Clinton administration.

According to the newspapers, longtime Democrat politico Sara Lister was forced into early retirement as assistant secretary of the Army, because she characterized the U.S. Marines as "extremists" wearing oddball uniforms who are dangerous. Leave it to a woman to throw a fashion comment into the middle of an otherwise important discussion, but other than that she was absolutely accurate.

It was the dangerousness of the U.S. Marine Corps and its patriotic "extremism" at Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal, Chosin Reservoir and Hue City which are major reasons that America has remained a great and powerful country.

The truth is that administration spin doctors silenced Lister because she focused unwanted attention on the Clinton White House's genuine attitude toward the U.S. armed forces.

Granted, the Marines have had less than a cordial relationship with the Clintons since the beginning. Shortly, after Bill was inaugurated, the Marine guards at the White House had to be threatened into saluting the draft dodger. Not long after that Marine Corps HQ balked at Hillary being the very first First Lady with her own helicopter. But all of this goes much deeper than that.

Lister's boss, Army Secretary Togo West, was appointed by Clinton largely because he is an associate of Rep. Ron (Red) Dellums, D-CA. Dellums is as far left as one can be without having a like-

ness of Lenin tattooed on a visible body-part, and has for many years been Fidel Castro's principal advocate in the U.S. Congress. When the Democrats controlled the House, Castro's buddy, Dellums, was chairman of the House Armed Services Committee as it began to destroy the military. It was under Dellums' leadership that a "kinder gentler" military structure began



to surface along with the ideas that de-emphasized a traditionally macho military while legitimizing openly homosexual lifestyles and putting women into combat units.

Perhaps more than the other military branches the Marine Corps has stubbornly resisted Clinton's policy of sissification, or whatever you want to call it. It is to the credit of the Corps that, unlike the Army, the USMC has not succumbed to politically motivated psycho-crap that distracts from combat readiness. It is for that same reason that Lister, among others, speaks of the Marines in the socialist political context of the "risks of total disconnection with society." It is, in fact, the distance from society which makes the Marine Corps less corruptible and, thus, more problematic to those bent on experiments in social engineering. It is certainly the Corps' distance from capricious politics that makes it dangerous to those in power who seem determined to weaken our military capabilities at the same time they are so friendly with the communist Chinese.

I was in the Marine Corps reserve for nine months before enlisting in the U.S. Army. Today, after watching politicians maim the other services, if I could sign up again, I would choose to be an "extremist" Marine. ✕

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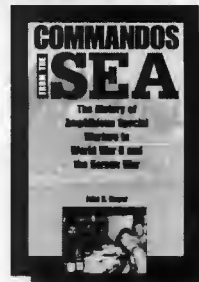
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## COMMANDOS FROM THE SEA

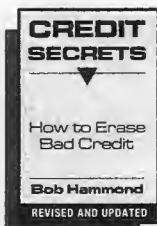
The History of Amphibious Special Warfare in World War II and the Korean War

by John B. Dwyer

From the shadows of history comes the fascinating story of America's top-secret amphibious commandos of World War II and Korea. Noted historian John B. Dwyer spent years painstakingly researching gripping first-person accounts of the renowned Navy Underwater Demolition Teams (the forerunners of today's SEAL Teams), Naval Combat Demolition Units, the Alamo Scouts, Unit Robby, Phib Recon Marines (now known as Force Recon), Scouts and Raiders, the Office of Strategic Services' (today's CIA) Maritime Unit, the Special Mission Group and other special operations commandos. With rare period photographs, including remarkable shots of amphibious commandos in action, Dwyer's landmark book moves from daring missions in North Africa, southern France, Normandy and Italy to the blood-drenched islands of the Pacific to Japanese-held China and the deadly shores of North Korea. 8 1/2 x 11, hardcover, photos, illus., 288 pp. **\$39.95**



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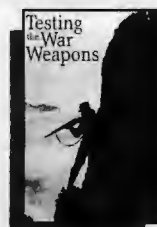
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by Timothy J. Mullin  
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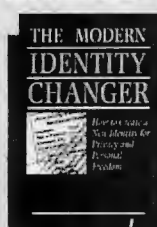
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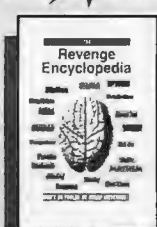
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The gold wreath represented God Brama who can transform from human to the eagle and can fly from universe to universe by a magical power. The writing translates: [One Who] Sacrificed Life For The Nation; it is pronounced *Leasbang Chivit, Doeumbei Cheat*.

The red background represents the blood we sacrificed to protect our country and nation; if we have to sacrifice our blood like the mountain, to fight until the last drop of blood. It also represents the original Cambodian Funan (mountain) of our ancestors who sacrificed their blood to protect our nation until now.

I wish you unending luck and prayers: God bless the U.S.A. and God bless the Special Forces at all times.

I hope to hear the word from oldtimers soon. Please write!

P.S. Chhada (Bodes)  
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Canada

## ENTIRELY INADEQUATE YET ALTOGETHER EFFECTIVE

I was reading a stack of old *Soldier Of Fortune* magazines given to me by a friend when I came across an article in the October '96 issue on the subject of lever-actions in various calibers.

I was struck by one observation which

said in part "it has become fashionable of late to ridicule the .30-30 cartridge ..."

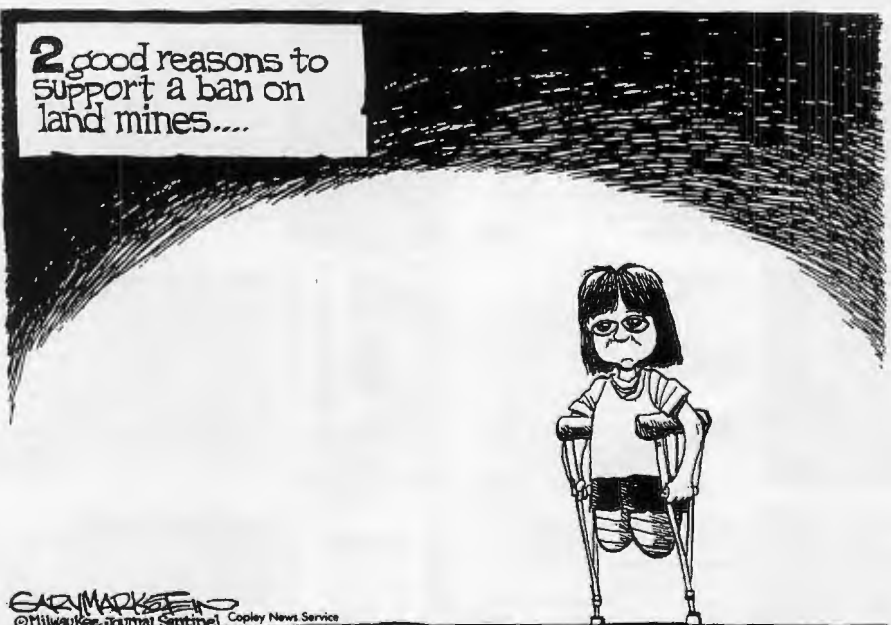
Well, now, I bought my Winchester Model 94 in .30-30 over 40 years ago and used it to shoot deer in the Santa Rita mountains south of Tucson, and it was very soon after that my friends started making jokes about it and its rainbow trajectory.

My favorite story about it was the case of a young visitor asking the old rancher about his rifle. "How does it shoot, Old Timer?" asked the tenderfoot.

"My thutty-thutty?" he replied, "It

## MINE TREATY ENTREATY

Believe me, I am not a fan of your current president, but I completely agree with Bill Clinton in his opposition to the Land Mine Treaty, and I hope the U.S. Congress backs him up all the way on this issue. I am afraid too many policy-makers in the western democracies, who ought to know better, are being swept up in the tidal wave of warm, fuzzy, feel-good political correctness propelling this treaty. All you need to judge the usefulness of this document is the fact that the People's Republic of China, the world's



shoots flat out to about 450 yards, and then it starts to rise a little!"

J.A. Mano  
Marana, Ariz.

*The old .30-30 round has been derided as weak ever since it had to compete with contemporary military rounds such as .30-40 Krag, .303 British, 8mm Lebel, 7.62 Russian rimmed, 7.65 Mauser et al. But it would be a front contender for having harvested the most game in North America, and that's because it has been so popular. And the reason it has been so popular over the past 100 years is that it is about the most powerful caliber that can be very comfortably fired from light, handy brush guns such as the old 94 Winchester or comparable Marlin lever guns. The performance potential of this round is very similar to the 7.62x39 ComBloc round — another "underpowered" round that has accounted for a lot of "game."*

biggest manufacturer and exporter of land mines, will not sign the treaty. While Boris Yeltsin hinted he may sign for Russia, his country's history of non-compliance with international agreements and his — at best — shaky control over his armed forces' internal policy do not inspire confidence. And of course, the world's terrorist groups from MRTA to Hammas are not lining up to sign, either.

The Land-Mine Treaty is about to join a long and embarrassing line-up, of which the most recent entry up to now was the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. And unlike nuclear weapons, land mines are cheap, easily mass-produced and require no sophisticated engineering or advanced technology. If, as your article "Islam A-Bomb" suggests, the Non-Proliferation Treaty is not worth the paper it's written on. The situation with the Land Mine Treaty is vastly worse.

The only effect this treaty will have in its present form would be to freeze out

# Professional Locksmithing Tools

## LOCKAID

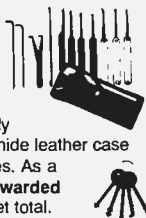
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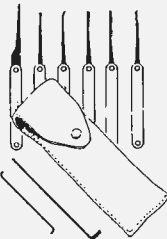
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- Copy of Lockpicking Simplified.



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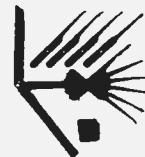
- Shirt Pocket Size.
- Top Grain Cowhide Leather.
- Has 13 Picks, Tension Wrenches and Broken Key Extractor.
- All Picks with Metal Handles.
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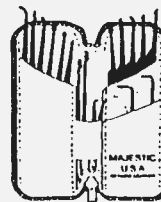


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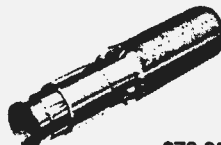
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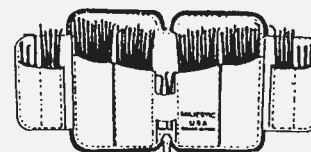
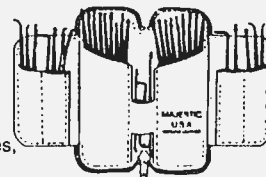
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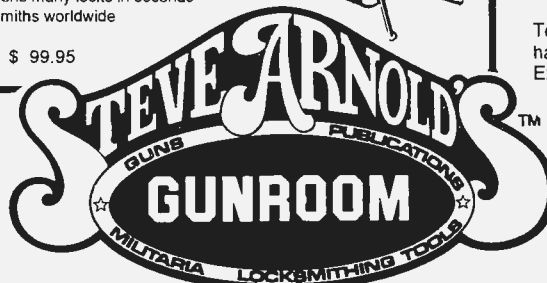


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newly-developed American technology of remote deactivation or deactivation by automatic timers, if the United States signs. It will do nothing to stop production of the current generation of indiscriminate people-killers-and-maimers outside the U.S. This technology is not perfect, but the Land Mine Treaty is a bogus alternative.

Yours sincerely,  
Peter Wrenshall

Very well put, Peter. We hate land mines — but the Land Mine Treaty as it presently is written is not the answer.

### THAT'S KNIFE, DON'T FIGHT

I'm a single, divorced mother of 12 foster children. After a recent robbery, I have found that I need some kind of self defense. Since my children are very young, I prefer not to use a handgun.

In the article "Practically Lethal," I learned that combat knives may be a solution to my problem. They can be as deadly as using any alternative method. While my self-defense classes were invaluable, I have finally found something to make me feel even more safe. After making a special trip to the local Army Surplus, I feel much more at ease after purchasing a military issue knife and a Ruana Bowie knife.

I suspect that my problem is not unique,

as many of my friends have also been seeking security without endangering their children. This article was very informative. Thank you very much!

Doreen Cooper  
Urich, Mo.

*Confronted by an irate mother of 12 with a knife, I'd probably slam the icebox door and leap out the kitchen window. But an intruder with more seriously criminal intent may well be armed, and a knife is no match if he has a gun. With 12 crumb-snatchers to keep track of, your safety concerns are an important consideration. Have you considered one of the better pepper sprays? They will stop a gunman at close range (as in your house), and — unless one of your many charges has a respiratory problem — an accidental discharge will not be lethal. I favor the Sprayfire (\$19.95 plus \$5.95 UPS shipping, from Diversified Safety Products, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 528551, Atlanta, GA 30355) because it is shaped and points like a pistol, and has a trigger-locking safety. The never-been-cut knife fantazoids will howl at this heresy, but having only a knife in a gunfight is a handicap. Knives were good weapons when they were the only weapons, but have been flat overtaken by other weapons that extend one's reach. Good luck with your troops!*

### MGN IS DEAD, LONG LIVE SMALL ARMS REVIEW

This is an urgent letter. For some unknown reason *Machinegun News*, the magazine of military weapons past and present, apparently stopped publishing. What happened?

Jose B. Torres

As far as we know, MGN is defunct. As we noted in *Bulletin Board* last month, the torch has been passed to *The Small Arms Review*, a new publication featuring writers such as Paulson, Truby, Choat, Shea, Ballou, Hillenburg, Dater, and a whole crew just as talented. A U.S. subscription is \$34.95 a year (12 issues). Contact them at, *The Small Arms Review*, 223 Sugar Hill Rd., Harmony, ME 04942; phone: 207-683-2959; fax: 207-683-2171, E-mail them at: [sareview@aol.com](mailto:sareview@aol.com).



### TEN COMMAND GUIDANCES?

I just read *Command Guidance* in the December '97 *SOF* by Charlton Heston.

God bless this man! He has said it all! His piece on "America's First Freedom" is absolutely the best I have ever seen, not

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only on the Second Amendment, but all of our cherished American Freedoms.

His statement toward the end of the article, "... a press that apparently can't comprehend that attacks on the Second Amendment set the stage for assaults on the First" is precisely what I voiced to a media type 15 years ago.

I recommend that your other readers pull this article and make wide distribution of it also.

James A. Johnson  
Brookfield, Mo.

*Many readers have written to express their concurrence with this editorial, to request permission to copy or reprint it, etc. Feel free to copy it and pass it around; copies are also available from the NRA, as are video tapes of Heston's speech before the Washington press corps.*

### LOVES THE FLICK

While flipping through channels this weekend I came across the *Soldier Of Fortune, Inc.* TV series. I find it to be an action-packed show with all the little technical details that you don't find in most of the Hollywood action military films and series. What surprised me the most was that I caught a glimpse of a Southern Air Transport aircraft in the episode I saw. I am currently an employee of that company as

an aircraft mechanic. I work at the Rickenbacker facility in Columbus, Ohio. Other than one person I spoke to, I wonder if anyone else in the facility where I work even knew about the show. I think they would find it interesting if they knew one of our birds was used in an episode.

Keir Walker  
Columbus, Ohio

*Hey, Keir, glad you found it entertaining. That's what the show is all about.*

### LOVES IT NOT

Glad to see that I'm not alone in thinking that you have gone too far. There are a lot of good men turning over in their graves after seeing how you have reduced their actions to a one hour politically correct version for the wannabe yuppie types. It looks like the person who wrote *JAG* did your program with the same format. Where in the real world can you see the shoe strings of a sniper at 1,000 yards, through the scope of a rifle. I would like to see more issues a year of the truth your magazine produces of the stories the press chooses not to cover than watch the trash you're putting out on the tube. Please don't take credit or make excuses why this program is on the air, if it is only for money and ego you have done a great injustice to all your mag was based on.

Please don't let it affect your future issues, you have a great magazine.

D. Warren  
Maryland

*Were there Leathernecks turning over in their graves when Hollywood did The Sands of Iwo Jima? Did Army vets thrash in their coffins when The Big Red One hit the screen? Did former medics writhe in agony once a week when M.A.S.H. came into their living rooms? No, and the very simple reason was that most folks don't have any problem separating fact from fiction, especially when the fiction is presented as fiction. We're flattered if folks connect everything to do with SOF magazine as hard fact, as we've spent better than two decades going and doing to get the news first-hand, so it will be uncensored fact. But: Soldier Of Fortune, Inc. the TV series, is fiction, and is presented as such. Lighten up. Enjoy. Except for occasional editorial mention, the TV series will not affect the magazine. Or vice versa, for that matter.*

### GIVE US SOME FLAK, MAC

Gripes, kudos, comments are always welcome from SOF readers. Write FLAK, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Please keep letters clear and concise or we'll do it for you. You can also E-mail comments to us at: editor@sofmag.com (no spam, please). ✕

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Tim Oest



Tim Abell, who plays Benny Ray Riddle on *Soldier Of Fortune, Inc.* TV series, holds up one of the “North Hollywood Bank Shootout” Bushmaster rifles as it is auctioned off at the SOF Convention in Las Vegas, for the benefit of surviving spouses and children of fallen LAPD members. At left are Melinda Clarke (who plays Margo Vincent), and Réal Andrews (who plays Jason “Chance” Walker). Check your local TV listings for air dates, time and channel. At right, slightly stooped from the weight of his jump wings, is *SOF*'s demolition wizard John Donovan.

## JOHN LAWMASTER DEAD FROM INJURY

*Soldier Of Fortune* extends belated condolences to the family and friends of Johnnie Ray Lawmaster, whose abuse by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms became a celebrated example among Second Amendment advocates of BATF's reckless disregard for the constitutional protections of law-abiding citizens (see “Gun Gestapo,” June '92).

Lawmaster, 49, died 23 July in a hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 10 days after his pickup truck was hit broadside by a teenaged driver allegedly at fault in the accident. Lawmaster was returning home from a square dance at the Christ United Methodist Church, where he was a member. At his funeral, he was remembered for his love of hunting, fishing, square-dancing and his two dogs, Booger and John Wayne. Lawmaster was an avid gun collector and an ardent defender of the Second Amendment.

On 16 December 1991 — coincidentally, the day after the 200th anniversary of the adoption of the Bill of Rights — about two dozen federal agents and local cops, led by BATF Special Agent Blair Ward, had raided Lawmaster's modest home, an American flag flying out front. (In a mysterious coincidence, while Lawmaster was dying in the Tulsa hospital last July, his home burned to the ground.)

As with so many BATF raids, agent Ward's search warrant was based on a single, unsubstantiated accusation that Lawmaster had an illegal weapon. Ward made no attempt to interview Lawmaster, a Vietnam veteran with no criminal record, or to corroborate the allegation. After luring Lawmaster away, lawmen trashed his home and left his belongings heavily damaged. Dozens of firearms and thousands of rounds of ammunition were left unsecured when the feds left the scene.

Despite Lawmaster's death, his federal lawsuit against Ward and other agents is alive, says his attorney, Steven L. Sessinghaus. The 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver has upheld the 4th Amendment-claim that Ward and others were unreasonably careless and wantonly destructive in the way they executed the search warrant.

“John Lawmaster was truly a good guy,” said Sessinghaus, who is continuing to press the lawsuit on behalf of Lawmaster's estate. “I am very sorry that he will now be unable to enjoy some satisfaction from his long battle with Blair Ward. (Sessinghaus can be e-mailed at sls@pcisys.net)

— James L. Pate

## BATF TARGETS HOME-SCHOOLERS

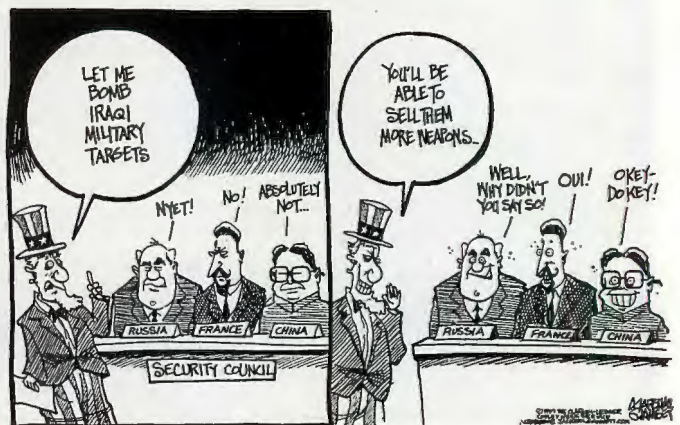
Families which own firearms and also home-school their children may be in for trouble under the fuzzy interpretation of the federal Gun Free School Zone Act by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

“The Gun Free School Zone Act, 18 U.S.C. Section 922(q), generally prohibits the possession of a firearm in a school zone,” BATF Director John W. Magaw informed U.S. Sen. Dan Coats (R-Ind.) in a letter last summer. “The term ‘school zone’ means in or on the grounds of a public, parochial, or private school, or within a distance of 1,000 feet from such grounds.

“Should a ‘home’ school be recognized by state law as a ‘school’ as defined by Section 921(a)(26),” Magaw wrote, “the possession of a firearm on the grounds of such school, or within 1,000 feet of school grounds, would violate the law. However, there are a number of exceptions ... for example, firearms possessed on private property.”

If you find that ambiguous or confusing, join the club. Forty-three states had already outlawed guns in schools when the Gun Free School Zones Act was passed. Magaw's interpretation can conveniently mean whatever BATF wants it to mean on a given day. Depending on how your particular state defines “school,” possession of a firearm within 1,000 feet of a home-schooling residence

distance of 1,000 feet from such grounds.



could make you a felon — including any firearms belonging to the home-schooling family, according to James H. Jeffries, III, an attorney specializing in federal firearms law, based in Greensboro, N.C.

Jeffries wants to hear from home-schoolers interested in becoming plaintiffs to challenge the law in North Carolina, where such interpretation applies, and from other states. The Home School Legal Defense Association has already initiated legal action in western Texas. James H. Warner, associate counsel for the National Rifle Association, also wants to hear from home-schooling families willing to sign on as plaintiffs to civil actions challenging the federal law. Jeffries can be e-mailed at slr1918a3@aol.com; or telephoned at (910) 282-6024. Warner may be contacted by writing: Jim Warner, NRA Legal Division, 11250 Waples Mill Rd., Fairfax, VA. 22030.

— JLP

### WIN IN WASHINGTON STATE

On last November's ballot in Washington State was a onerous proposal that would have: prohibited transfer of a handgun in any manner without a trigger lock device; caused *de facto* registration of all handgun owners by requiring a license to possess or control a handgun; made any unregistered handgun contraband, subject to confiscation; prohibited the sale of a handgun by a private citizen; made necessary the application for a safety license, which would have waived an individual's rights to privacy of medical records. In short, it was a showcase of camel's-nose legislation, a precursor to civilian disarmament in the Northwest.

Voters beat it back by a resounding two-to-one margin. This quote from a Western Fish & Wildlife Federation, Inc. (WFWF) newsletter explains part of the reason they did:

*During the latter days of the campaign Robert K. Brown (SOF) sent Pat Mackley to town to work with Greg Dahlgren, WFWF's Lobbyist/Field Representative and Mr. John Borden, Legal Counsel for WFWF in putting together some radio ads to be broadcast in the I-5 corridor. Mr. Mackley was the man on the ground during the "Remove Foley"-campaign and he proved to be effective in this battle. With the money raised by Bob we were able to air some extremely effective radio spots against I-676. Despite the short time allowed, enough money was raised by Brown and friends which made this possible. By far the most effective radio spot we did was by Mr. John Borden, a firefighter, EMT and legal counsel for WFWF. It was so effective someone on the other side of the issue called the Seattle Fire Department to complain ...*

Kudos to all who helped!

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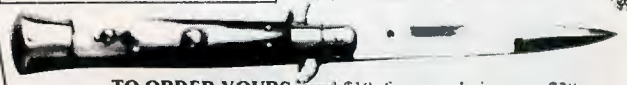
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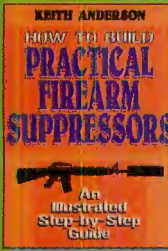
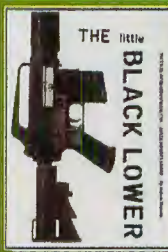
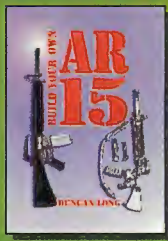
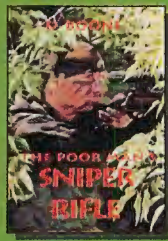
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ical detections made during the Gulf War, but declined to say their discovery provided any evidence of a conspiracy to destroy the documents.

Armed with search warrants, the investigators found the documents among the personal effects of an active-duty officer, in a storage facility. Some 15 pages containing 165 new entries were among the papers. That officer, who had access to the logs during the Gulf War, is now under criminal investigation for wrongfully taking and possessing classified documents.

A total of 223 entries were found, but it is believed 58 of those duplicated information already available. Still not found are approximately 130-160 pages of logs that were required to have been kept and safeguarded, which investigators believe were destroyed in or after October 1994, when the Central Command J3 NBC office was downsized and relocated.

In their effort to find the missing logs, investigators used interviews, lie-detector tests, and forensic techniques to try and retrieve computer records. Their report noted that "although directives, regulations and internal CENTCOM J-1 memoranda required that Gulf War records be maintained, safeguarded and archived as permanent records, the logs, in their entirety, were not safeguarded and archived by CENTCOM."

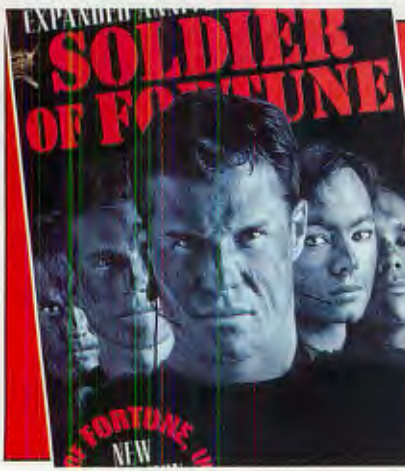
The missing NBC-desk logs, which were maintained by Army Chemical Corps officers in the Joint Operations Center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, have been sought by veterans groups and Pentagon officials in hope they would contain information which might lead to understanding of Gulf War Syndrome.

## NO GIs ON BORDER

Congress has backed off plans to deploy a possible 10,000 U.S. service members on the Mexican border, and has remained adamant in its opposition to deploying U.S. troops to perform environmental protection missions in the Amazon rain forest.

These decisions, as reflected in the 1998 Defense Authorization Bill, more closely define the role of the U.S. military, and are supported by the Pentagon. DoD officials never did view with favor the use of U.S. military troops in a law-enforcement function such as helping Border Patrol and Immigration officials along the southern border, maintaining all along that this was not a proper peace-time function of the military. Voices in other quarters also raised the question of such deployments possibly being in violation of the Posse Comitatus act.

Administration calls for using American troops to police environmental protection missions in such places as the Amazon basin, have now been muted to the possibility of U.S. Forces helping to train foreign militaries for environmental-preservation missions. ☒



## Attention Soldier Of Fortune, Inc. fans!

Soldier of Fortune Magazine's expanded anniversary issue, October 1997, features detailed coverage of the new hit TV series Soldier of Fortune, Inc., with behind-the-scenes reporting, exclusive interviews and photos from the set of the military action-adventure show. Plus an awesome cover featuring the TV series cast. This jam-packed issue also contains a bigger-than-usual dose of the kind of reporting SOF readers have come to expect: from Russia to Vietnam, the Sudan to Peru, SOF is there.

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The U.S. Seals have just completed a (uh, this is kind of classified, please don't tell any of your Russian friends) a Secret Site in Southern California (sounds like a song, doesn't it?) known as Seal City.

Said city is designed to test seals in a variety of both covert and SWAT type entry and building search/containment techniques.

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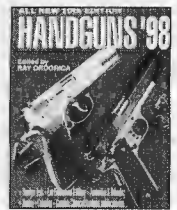
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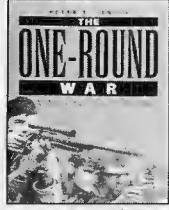
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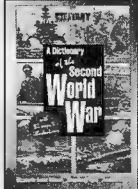
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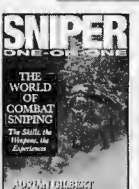
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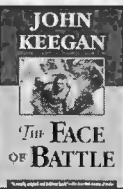
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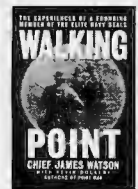
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## Green Lights And Red Dots

**On** 31 July 1997, the U.S. Army signed a contract with Aimpoint, guaranteeing the purchase of 80,000 (with the option of purchasing an additional 20,000) Aimpoint Comp M electronic reflex sights for the M16A2E4 rifle and M4 carbine series. These sights are now the primary aiming systems for these firearms.



style base on the flat up upper receiver of an M16/AR-15. Any scope mounted directly to these rails will be too low. In addition, removal of the quick-detachable carrying handle removes the rifle's rear iron sight as well, leaving nothing for emergency purposes. G.G.&G. also manufactures an integrated rail system for the M16/AR-15 that meets the needs of armed professionals in both the military and law enforcement.

There are two sizes. The standard length, which is the same length as upper receiver's integral rail, carries a suggested retail price of \$145. An "Extended Delta

Aimpoint's electronic reflex sights are manufactured using a unique patented double front lens that eliminates the parallax error inherent in other red-dot sights. This permits the operator to get on target more quickly and shoot more accurately, because the dot does not need to be centered inside the sight. Binocular vision is not required to use the Aimpoint sight.

The Comp M sight adopted by the U.S. Army is slightly shorter in overall length (5 inches with lens covers) than the well-known Aimpoint 5000 (5.75 inches). Both feature a 3 MOA (3 inches at 100 yards) dot. The optics used in the Comp M have band pass reflection coating for compatibility with night-vision equipment. These units can be powered by either silver oxide or lithium batteries. Battery life averages 150 to 250 hours. Elevation and windage adjustments are 1/2 MOA for each click. The Comp M has 10 switch positions: off, six daylight settings, an extra high intensity setting, and two settings in which a resistor is used to bring the red dot down to an intensity level that can only be seen by night vision equipment. The Aimpoint Comp ML has eight daylight settings and no provision for use with night vision equipment. At the present time, the Aimpoint Comp M is the hot ticket for the M16/AR-15 flat top series of rifles and carbines. Its suggested retail price is \$379. For further information contact Aimpoint USA (Dept. SOF, 420 W. Main Street, Geneseo, IL 61254; phone: 309-944-1702, fax: 309-944-3676).

In my opinion, the best way to attach an Aimpoint Comp to the M16/AR-15 is by means of a G.G.&G. (Dept. SOF, 3602 E. 42nd Stravenue, Tucson, AZ 85713; phone: 520-748-7167; fax: 520-748-7583) Aimpoint ring. Manufactured from 6061 T6 billet aluminum, this ring is attached to the base by using a squeeze rail design incorporating a single thumbnut. There is also a square locking cross bar for recoil control. The ring body has a built-in insulated spare battery compartment with a spare Aimpoint battery cap. This is an important feature and it's located on the side of the ring for easy access. The suggested retail price is \$155.

I would not attach an Aimpoint Comp M to the integral Weaver-



(top) Aimpoint Comp M with ITT 6010A night vision mounted to the rear, both on a G.G.&G. Extended Delta Length integrated rail system provides the operator with both a critical tactical edge over his opponent and the capability of surgical accuracy in the dark — the very environment in which most contact with the enemy occurs. (bottom) Aimpoint Comp M sandwiched between Litton M983 night vision at the rear and an Insight Technology AN/PAQ-4C pulsating laser aiming module, all mounted on a G.G.&G. Extended Delta Length integrated rail system.

Length" rail system, which extends 1.32 inches beyond the front of the receiver and permits the installation of long-eye-relief "Scout"-type scopes as well as placing the Aimpoint Comp M out where it belongs for fast target acquisition, is also available and sells for \$150. The extended-length rail also permits use of the rail system's integral flip-up rear sight in conjunction with the red dot and, even more important permits you to mount a pocket-size night vision scope in back of the Aimpoint Comp M. These mounts will raise the line of sight by 0.530-inch above the

upper receiver's integral base. This is just enough to provide a perfect cheek weld with almost all types of optical sights.

The G.G.&G. integrated rail system's integral flip-up peep aperture rear sight has two apertures: a large aperture which serves as a "ghost ring" for close-in work and a small aperture for longer distances. The sight provides full windage adjustment with a knob on the right side. Elevation can be adjusted to the 100/300-meter battle-sight setting by means of the front sight post. The G.G.&G. emergency rear sight has a three-position, positive-lock detent system which will repeat zero each and every time it is rotated by hand up into the viewing position. The sight is extremely rugged and because of its unique locking mechanism is not easily damaged, as it just rotates rearward when struck by a hard blow.

Manufactured from 6061 T6 billet aluminum, these rail systems are black hardcoat anodized as per Mil A 8625 Rev. F Class II Type III. An important feature is a rectangular recoil lug on the underside that insures consistent accuracy. Installation can be accomplished without

*Continued on page 64*

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## Mission Statement



O.G. and Arlo joined me in the grisly task of collecting and wrapping the body parts. We were unanimous in our pledge that not one piece of an American was going to be deserted. (Inset photos) Initial leg of the final journey home. The bodies of two Americans are STABOed out of the Cambodian jungle. The bird lifted, then banked away, its pilot no doubt joyous to be heading out of the AO and KR gunners. Totally disheartened, I radioed the helicopter to pick up my SF friends. While awaiting their insertion, I photographed and sketched the crash site.

The U.S. Cessna Caravan, based at Kampong Chhang Airport, Cambodia, was conducting a magnetic-density, oil-exploration survey throughout the kingdom.

Minutes after midnight, 30 April 1997, my security forces and I escorted the pilot, Jim Jackson, and survey engineer, Charles Christian, from their accommodations in town to the airport. The 12-kilometer journey along National Road number 5 was site of frequent attacks by Khmer Rouge (KR) holdouts and out-back bandits.

Normally, crews flew their missions at night because they presented less exposure for the KR, rogue army and other trigger-fond malcontents who hit and run at will throughout volatile Cambodia.

The plane was readied for an eight-hour mission, its return slated for not later than 0900. Preparations, pre-flight checks, and take-off all were routine. Weather conditions included broken, scattered clouds and 1-mile visibility; but ground conditions were improving.

At 0115, the Cessna climbed into the humid, eerie Cambodian sky. At 0600, upon completion of an airport-perimeter check with indigenous security personnel, I noted the plane had not returned.

By 0900, I assumed the worst and immediately directed emergency actions in accordance with established operating procedures.

Representatives of the survey company in Kampong Chhnang, Phnom Penh, and Houston, were alerted. After getting commo

with all other airports in Cambodia, and determining the aircraft had not put down at a friendly location, I phoned the U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia, gave him a quick SITREP, requested he liaise with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) and urged the launch of a search-and-rescue op with their Russian-built Mi-8 choppers.

I asked the U.S. Defense Attaché to authorize detachment of a U.S. Army Special Forces medic to link with me for the operation's duration. SF medics are the most highly trained in the world and able to sustain life through the quagmire of mass trauma situations in hostile environments.

The Ambassador and Defense Attaché generously authorized two SF-types: Sergeants First Class (medic) O.G. Kelley, and Bob Arlo, an SF Engineer.

At 1445, an RCAF Mi8 helicopter whipped in to Kampong Chhnang to initiate the mission. On board were the two SF personnel, my co-worker, Paul Greaves, a former SBS (Small Boat Service) British Marine, representatives from the Ministry of National Defense, and a sizable indigenous security force, armed for bear.

I briefed the RCAF pilots and personnel and provided them coordinates just off the computer from Singapore and Alaska Air Rescue Commands. Both commands were picking up the emergency transponder beacon from the downed plane, indicating the crash occurred at 0130, shortly after takeoff. The antiquated Mi-8 lacked state-of-the-art equipment that would direct a flight to the

crash site. Having plotted the points on the map, I directed the pilots to fly concentric circles around those locations. After two hours of searching, and an updated position from Singapore, we were at last on target.

The Cessna, gliding along its survey flight altitude of 5,200 feet, had flown into a 5,800-foot mountain.

The RCAF pilots were incapable of bringing their choppers to a hover above the site, or perform slow tree-top-level passes to confirm survivors. The pilots overflew the area at 6,000 feet at airspeeds of 90-knots.

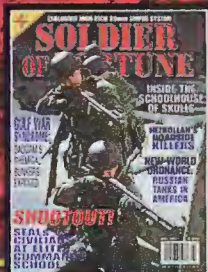
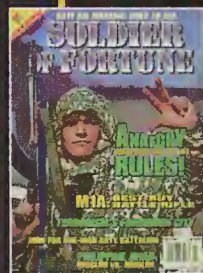
They balked at making multiple passes over this region — a stronghold of the KR. Upon returning to Kampong Chhnang airport, a Cambodian army colonel from the Ministry of National Defense gave a thumbs-down for the use of his helicopter to insert my team. The RCAF helicopter then returned to Phnom Penh for further deliberations.

I rang a local army commander and got quick approval to begin prepping for a ground rescue. Materiel was procured, scrounged or bought with money from my pocket. The army assembled 80 security troops, including personnel who had run into the KR in this AO before. But the damned KR were not our sole concern; there were tigers, lethal snakes, and thousands of anti-personnel mines.

Departure was laid on for 0430. Trucks would smash along the jungle trails some 35 miles to the base of the mountain. From there, the troops would scale the mountainous terrain the remaining 6-8 miles to the

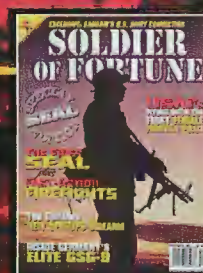
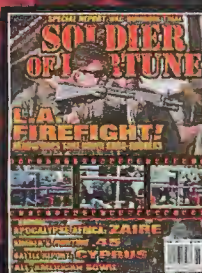
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crash site. Estimated walk time: two days, provided no enemy contact.

At 0400, 1 May 1997, I received notification from Phnom Penh that commo had been made with Tex-Air, Inc., a Houston-based helicopter company operating in Vietnam. Their reps volunteered to divert one of their aircraft to Cambodia to participate in the rescue mission.

Deciding that a two-pronged attempt would up the chances of success, as well as infuse an attractive measure of added security, I queried Greaves, the former Brit Marine.

Less-experienced in air ops than I, he, at once, signed on to head the ground element, while O.G. and Arlo would team with me. If the crash site was inaccessible, they could provide air support and cover fire and rappel into a makeshift LZ set up by the ground element.

By 0730, the Tex-Air Aerostar helicopter from Saigon whirled in on station, piloted by Joe Grady, a retired U.S. Army CW5 who had flown helicopters during, and since, the Vietnam War.

Following my briefing, the chopper was hastily re-configured by tearing out the rear seats and securing a single 120-foot rope for insertion. Two "Murphys," however, tried to screw up things: the weather, and the geo-coordinates computed by the RCAF pilots. Because the inexperienced pilots were using poor equipment — and dead-reckoning — their coordinates were off *only* by a mile-and-a-half. Plus, rain and thickening clouds were shrouding the mountain tops preventing the Aerostar from reaching the crash site.

Before dusk, the weather broke and the site was located. Grady, the Aerostar pilot, brought in his bird and hovered gracefully just over the trees. His prop wash bullied the 100-footers apart allowing me a clear view of the crash location.

The doomed plane was shredded into hundreds of pieces. The motionless body of the survey engineer was visible, but I saw absolutely no sign of the pilot.

Our ground element, due to the steep mountains and dense jungle, was able to move only about a mile into the heavy bush. I advised them to abort the ground-rescue, fall back, and secure and establish an LZ and intermediate staging base. If the Mike Force was required, they could be inserted via air from the LZ.

At 0600 the next morning, my air-rescue team overflowed the crash site, but lousy weather and a heavy fuel load prevented the pilot from carrying more than two personnel per trip, one of whom had to act as spotter, relay commands to the pilot, and recover the rope after each insertion.

I was the first guy down, rappelling the 120 feet with my AK-47, basic load of ammo, medical supplies, and body bags. Sweating profusely, I prayed that no KR "reception committee" waited.

Following a quick security check, I located the two Americans, their bodies torn to pieces by the impact. Totally disheartened, I radioed the helicopter to pick up my

Continued on page 65



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It's been called "the most brutally effective fighting system ever seen."

Before explaining more about this system, here's how Jerry Peterson, the creator of this system, became the first — and only — civilian ever to standardize, license and teach a hand-to-weapon fighting system to the United States military.

In 1989, Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC), the group which controls all SEAL activity, was looking for ways to standardize hand-to-weapon combat techniques. After an exhaustive review, they had rejected every single martial art form in the world.

They found each completely unworkable in combat-oriented fighting situations where SEALs were in full gear, carrying 100# packs, and often knee-deep in water.

### Amazing Scientific System

Then a SEAL NSWC officer (with black belts in 3 martial arts) saw Jerry Peterson's scientific fighting system. What he stumbled on wasn't martial arts. In fact it was unlike anything he'd ever seen before.

The SEAL officer watched in disbelief as a class of inexperienced students threw real punches for virtually 1 full hour, never repeating the same sequences. In one session he witnessed more fighting than most martial arts students see in a year.

Later, two top brass at NSWC saw the officer demonstrating moves he'd learned. But intrigue turned to doubt when they learned the originator was an ex-Army enlisted man.

Still they met with Jerry, as much out of admiration for his Vietnam record as anything (he spent 15 months as lead point for Charlie Company, the 173rd Airborne — one of the most decorated units of the war). As Vietnam vets, the SEAL officers figured Jerry at least would understand their needs.

### Easily Defeats Decorated SEAL

But they were totally unprepared for what happened. To prove his system, Jerry Peterson and a highly-decorated SEAL Officer (and at 240, 100 pounds heavier than Jerry) went toe-to-toe — but at half speed. To the Officer's amazement he was instantly disabled and dropped to his knees.

Only then did he realize — had he not been talked out of going full speed by others who knew the awesome power of Jerry Peterson's system, his false confidence in his martial arts training and in his sheer size advantage would have left him with an arm broken as easily as a match stick!

In 5 short minutes these SEAL officers — men who had seen everything in the way of brutal fight-

ing, and who had virtually unlimited budgets to develop the SEALs into the world's best — were blown away by Jerry Peterson's *Autokinematic™* fighting system.

### Officially Required SEAL Training

Following a pilot program at Command headquarters all SEALs began receiving this training. Still, hardheaded, cocky, non-believing SEALs, many with extensive martial arts backgrounds, constantly tested Jerry:

□ SEALs are the most proficient combat swimmers in the world. Yet 40-year-old Jerry (who wasn't a particularly good swimmer) "drowned" SEAL after SEAL in training. His scientific principles apply on any terrain.

□ SEALs are trained to run 20 miles in soft sand. But Jerry (who really wasn't in great shape) had them gasping just 5 minutes into his first workouts while he participated effortlessly. He used breathing techniques others had never seen (techniques he can teach you in minutes).

□ In Europe Jerry challenged a deployed SEAL platoon to pin him against a wall. All thought it a joke. Yet he escaped — from the grasp of 14 of the most proficient fighting men in the world (then showed it was no trick — simply physics, and easily learned).

Today SEALs use all these scientific techniques and many more. Since 1989, Navy SEALs go through a minimum of 40 and up to 600 rigorous hours of Jerry Peterson's training prior to deployment (often in intense, 24-hour a day sessions).

### Top Government Officials Amazed

His system was demonstrated to Navy Admirals, a 4-Star General, and Congressional leaders — as well as the Secretary of the Navy and the U.S. Secretary of Defense!

Jerry was even called in prior to Desert Storm to brief the military on using *Neural Offensive Linguistics™* (a cornerstone of his system, it defines a mind set which eliminates all defensive thinking, allowing anyone, even you, to make instantaneously correct decisions in the midst of any hostile environment).

### Devastating Power Gives You An Unfair Advantage

In his *HCS* video course Jerry Peterson introduced you to his revolutionary system.

Now, with the publication of *Jerry Peterson's SCAR-HCS Hand-To-Weapon* fighting system, Jerry leads you into the never-before-seen world of brutal, no-holds-barred gun, knife and club fighting — material you've never seen (unless you were in elite Special Operation forces).

You'll learn the same hand-to-weapon techniques, the same mental approaches, the same 'kill' sets Jerry developed for over 200 SEAL SCARS instructors. (These SCARS instructors now teach this system to all branches of the military Spec Op forces — Army, Navy and Air Force).

You'll know how to defeat, seriously disable and, when necessary, kill anyone threatening your life or the life of a loved one or friend!

### Guaranteed To Work In Your Most Nightmarish Hostile Situation

Everything in his system was proven in the most intense war lab of the past 30 years — Vietnam!

But this isn't a course to impress friends at your Karate studio. The Instructor Qualification Series is Jerry Peterson's complete professional fighting system.

And professional fighting has but one objective: to defeat an attacker incredibly fast. In 29 years Jerry's longest fight lasted but 5 seconds!



Official SEAL SCARS-CFC  
Creator Jerry Peterson

This system is only for those who need a powerful yet amazingly simple system (simple because it's based on quickly-mastered scientific principles not a difficult art form) to protect them in life-threatening situations.

No Navy SEAL has ever lost in hand-to-hand combat when correctly applying Jerry's system! And they never will (nor will you) because ... his system is undefeatable!

### This Totally Integrated System Enables You To Destroy Any Attacker — With Absolutely No Fear Or Hesitation!

Cheap imitators advertise fighter after fighter after fighter — a hodgepodge of unrelated, nonscientific moves. Now they even lie, hoping to con you into believing SEALs would lose to these guys. But they know. No one beats a Peterson-trained SEAL.

These 'wanna-bes' teach one move if an attacker swings a fist at you, another if he's got a knife.

But Jerry Peterson's scientific system teaches you why you MUST use the exact same techniques — with a weapon or without! What everyone else teaches is wrong. Just ask the SEALs!

The imitators claim they've trained Navy SEALs. But Jerry Peterson is the sole creator of the official hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon combat fighting system used by the SEALs today.

He's the only civilian with a Naval Special Warfare course number (SCARS-CFC# K-431-0096) plus a new \$2.5 million military facility predicated solely on his SCARS training.

The Navy SEAL 'wanna-be' trainers? They've got nothing — no official status, no course number.

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Jerry Peterson's system is brutal. It has to be. Yet it's surprisingly easy to learn. It requires NO athletic ability, NO speed, NO conditioning.

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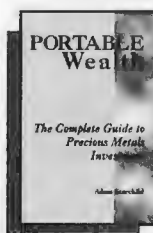
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## SWATCOM

### Tactical Communications Manual for SWAT Operations

by Tony L. Jones

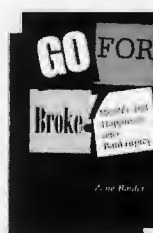
In today's high-tech world, technology often breeds overreliance on a single system, as is the case when SWAT teams depend too heavily on radio communications. In his latest book, Tony L. Jones, a tactical/security consultant with years of experience in SWAT team leadership and training, presents a wide variety of communication methods that SWAT teams can utilize during a tactical operation. Following an in-depth look at radio operating procedure and equipment, Jones offers detailed instruction in the effective use of hand and arm signals, telephones, pyrotechnics, light signals, messengers and more. In addition, he examines the advantages and drawbacks of each method, as well as how its strengths can be exploited and its inherent weaknesses avoided. By training in the methods outlined in this manual, SWAT organizations can ensure the kind of clear, secure, accurate communications that will enable them to operate effectively in teams and are critical to any mission's success. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, photos, illus., 144 pp. **\$18.00**



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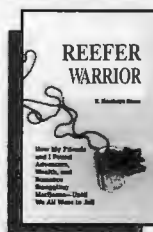
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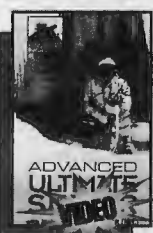
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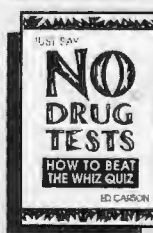
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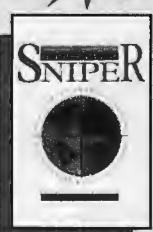
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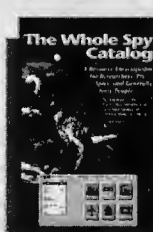
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# SLICK WILLIE WATCH

## Try It: Lie If You're Caught

"Oops," explained a Clinton aide. The president accidentally used his new line-item veto to wipe out several multi-million dollar defense projects.

In October, when Clinton tried to axe 38 projects from a \$287 million military construction bill, he probably thought no one would notice. Republicans did, and quickly began drafting a bill to override the vetoes. Sensing a victory by angered and betrayed Republicans, Clinton played his trump card: He lied.

Clinton's budget director, Franklin Raines, flashed a memo to the Senate appropriations panel that said several of the 38 vetoes — up to 28 — were made by mistake.

Next time, Clinton should be more slick. One project he tried nixing was in Mississippi — home of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. Another was in South Dakota, home of Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle.

What next?

"Gee's Hillary, I didn't mean to stop payment on Chelsea's tuition check."

## Not A Mistake

A more serious veto, and one the Department of Defense appears to be going along with, will eliminate three programs essential to future U.S. capability to control outer space.

In October, Clinton vetoed three programs including the Clementine II asteroid intercept experiment, the Army's Kinetic Kill Anti-Satellite Weapon and the Military Space Plane. Recent war games, says *Defense News*, have established these programs as "decisive to the future conduct of terrestrial operations."

The Air Force, *Defense News* reports, has responded by rewriting its doctrines, mission requirements and budget request to delete references to the need for such capabilities.

## Pol Made Mistakes, Too

OK, so Clinton didn't mean to axe multi-million dollar military projects from an obscure spending bill. Accidents happen.

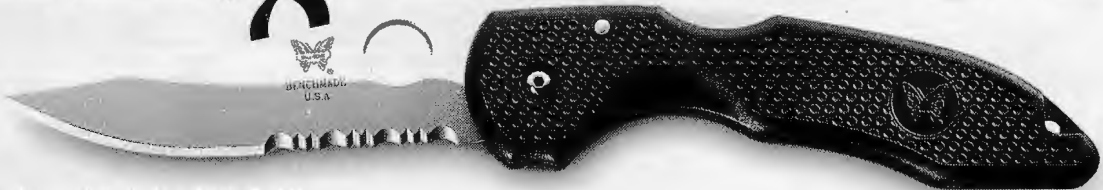
And Pol Pot, the former Khmer Rouge leader and obvious Clinton fan, didn't mean to kill a million or more Cambodians in the 1970s.

Pol, publicly interviewed for the first time since 1979 by *SOF* contributing editor Nate Thayer, must have learned some consciousness-clearing political moves from Slick. Granted, his sins go deeper than lurid affairs in patrol cars, broken promises about troop withdrawals, and sleazy fundraising. But Pol's rhetoric sounds astoundingly familiar.

In an interview for *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Pol told Thayer he did not intend to kill anyone.

"I came to carry out the struggle, not to kill people," he said. "Even now, and you can look at me: am I a savage person? My conscience is clear."

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If this type of thing works, Clinton has no worries. Stop wasting time and legal fees with Paula Jones denials. Just say it, Bill: "I didn't mean to end up naked in a hotel room, carrying on an extramarital affair. It was a mistake. I have a clear conscience."

### One Point Safe

Russian workers from a weapons plant drove off with two nuclear warheads in 1993. In early 1997, a former Russian national security adviser said more than 80 suitcase-sized atom bombs were missing from Moscow's arsenal.

Just a few of the stories told in *One Point Safe*, a book written by Andrew and Leslie Cockburn, contributing editors for *Vanity Fair*.

The book takes aim at the Clinton Administration for standing by while nuclear materiel is stolen from Moscow's stockpile of 23,000 nuclear warheads. It blames Clinton and his cabinet, among others, for failing to respond to the threat of missing Russian nukes for fear of jeopardizing their relationships with the Yeltsin government.

### On That Note

Gordon Oehler, longtime director of the CIA's Nonproliferation Center "retired" at age 55, saying he'd become the subject of too much criticism.

But U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Penn., believes Oehler's retirement was forced by the Clinton Administration and its allies in congress.

For 25 years, Oehler has been charged with coordinating intelligence from various government agencies about the dangers of nuclear weapons and missile development throughout the world. Weldon, a member of the Committee on National Security, told the *New York Times* Oehler was punished for honestly briefing Congress about Russian and Chinese exports of dangerous nuclear technology

and missiles to Iran, Pakistan and other unstable countries.

"It's a pattern of this administration, when it gets information that runs counter to the policy, they try to destroy the person that brings the message," Weldon told the *Times*.

### Rural America Booms. Call The ATF

For five years, the Clinton Administration has exploited racial fears and urban tensions with talk of more affirmative action, mandatory bilingual education, and the appointment of an attorney general who wants unwarranted inner-city weapons searches — a goal that inspired at least one black militia.

To liberals, racial strife means economic glut for the bureaucracies they cherish.

Efforts to regulate race relations, of course, have backfired — forcing a wedge between whites and minorities not seen under Reagan's more hands-off approach to urban affairs.

So-called "white flight" is back in new form, bigger than ever, with suburbanites flocking to jerkwater spots Clinton long ago forgot about. Demographers warn of a "Balkanization" of America. Whites, the U.S. Census Bureau reports, are leaving metropolitan areas for rural counties in Colorado, Utah, Missouri, Idaho, Kansas, Texas, Montana and Nevada.

The Census Bureau reports reversal of a decade-long decline in rural population in the '80s, with rural counties seeing a net influx of more than 1.6 million people, mostly white, from 1990 through 1995.

"They [fleeing white people] won't be concerned about issues like affirmative action or bilingual education," said William Frey, a demographer at the University of Michigan, in the *New York Times*.

The electorate, of course, can go just so far in escaping Clinton's social engineers. After all, rural isolationism has proved deadly in the '90s (ask Branch Davidians, tax protesters and garden-variety weirdos.)

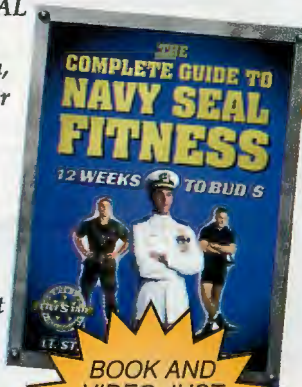
Most likely, Clinton will outlaw "white flight." Call the ATF. ☒

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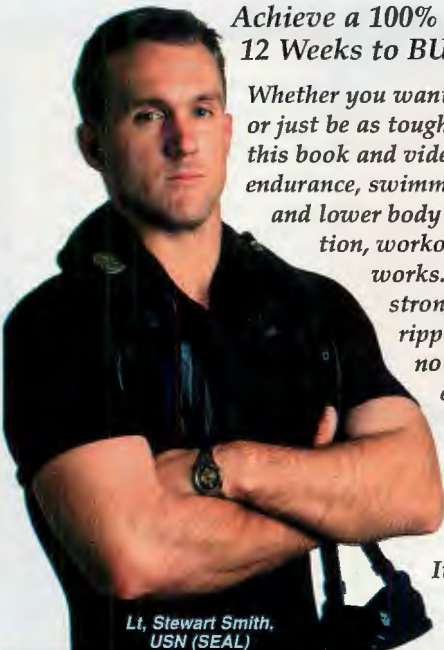
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# WORLD SITREP



1

## UNITED STATES

**Chinese sanctions lifted:** Clinton waives 8-year sanctions on nuclear exports to China. Chinese President Jiang Zemin to forgo nuclear contracts with Iran. U.S. defense contractors look for more trade sanctions to lift, allowing additional future arms sales to Beijing. • **30,000 defense jobs threatened:** William Cohen, U.S. Defense Secretary, to eliminate 30,000 jobs from defense agencies by year 2000. Sweeping DOD reform outlined in report "Leading Change in a New Era" by Task Force on Defense Reform, charged with improving Pentagon efficiency. Plan to eliminate Assistant Secretary of Defense Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (C4I) for new office focused only on intelligence. • **Tiny war planes:** Pentagon to build fleets of tiny remote unmanned fighter planes, about 6 inches long, for communications, reconnaissance, lethal missions. Planes to be used in cities, forests, mountain areas and other obstacle-filled terrain. • **China skeptics:** Anti-China legislation proposed in congress in wake of talks between Clinton and Zemin. GOP proposals call for sanctions, punitive actions against Beijing, countering White House position. One bill would restrict entry to United States by any Chinese leader involved in 1989 Tianamen Square attack.

2

## RUSSIA

**Suitcase-sized A-bombs?** Gen. Lebed says several "suitcase" sized nuclear bombs missing from nuclear arsenal. Yeltsin adviser says such bombs were built. Russian leaders deny such bombs, but leave open possibility of larger bombs, size of "steamer trunk," made by KGB during '70s. • **Naval downfall:** New statistics show suffering Russian navy in wake of Soviet collapse. Since 1987, Naval personnel has dropped from 480,000 to 270,000. Statistics show 50% of all warships inoperable, with remainder undermanned by 35%. Navy spokesman Alexander Veledeev says reforms and further personnel cuts ahead. • **Arming Iran:** U.S. House and Senate Russian aid bills restrict release of funds on condition of presidential certification Moscow stops transfer of nuclear technology to Iran. White House issues diplomatic protest notes to curb Russian support of Iranian missile program. White House appoints Ambassador Frank Wisner special envoy on Russian/Iran nuke issue. • **Agreements formalized:** Yeltsin-Clinton Helsinki agreements on ABM treaty formalized in eight documents signed after meeting of U.N. General Assembly. Documents add Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine as parties to treaty.

8

## THAILAND

**Currency crisis:** Thailand's defense budget likely to dip nearly 30% of planned \$4 billion. Ailing defense budgets throughout Southeast Asia prompt military officials in Bangkok to consider pooling procurement funds for unprecedented sharing of assets during regional currency crisis. • **Iran's threat:** Iran warns Thailand relations may suffer if Iranian Hossein Shahriarifar, convicted of plotting to blow up Israeli Embassy, is not released.

9

## NORWAY

**Center-right coalition government:** Christian Democrat Dag Jostein Fjaervoll appointed defense minister by new prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, replacing Jorgen Kosmo. No significant changes expected in defense policies before 1999 local elections.

10

## ENGLAND

**Arms trade soars:** International arms trade reverses decade of steep decline, increasing 13% in 1995 and 8% in '96, says study by International Institute for Strategic Studies. Study shows Middle East as biggest regional arms market, followed by East Asia.

11

## BELGIUM

**Permanent Joint Council:** NATO and Russian officials skeptical of near-term results from Permanent Joint Council (PJC), new bilateral framework for cooperation. Progress stunted by Yeltsin's armed services overhaul and opposition from other politicians to NATO enlargement.

13

## INDIA

**Bodo rebels:** Sudden upsurge of violence in northeastern part of India. Bodo Liberation Tiger rebels remain active in Assam, along with Leftist People's War Group in Andhra Pradesh, the Nagas along the Burmese border in Manipur, the Maoists in Bihar, the Sikhs in Punjab, and the All Tripura Tiger Force.

14

## MEXICO

**General unrest:** Brawl breaks out between Zapatista and government supporters in Chiapas. Mexico denies Amnesty International charge it's failing to protect human rights. U.S. offers \$2 million reward for drug lord Felix Arellano. Mexico agrees to allow U.S. anti-drug missions, allowing U.S. surveillance ships and planes to refuel at Mexican bases. • **U.S. pleas:** U.S. Senators Coverdell and Feinstein call on Mexico to arrest and extradite drug barons and allow DEA to carry arms in Mexico as condition of future certification as U.S. ally.

3

### CHINA

**Weapons to Russia:** U.S. analysts fear China's purchase of advanced fighters, submarines and nuclear missile guidance systems, from Russia, will tilt balance of military power in region to China, causing potential future challenge of Moscow's regional supremacy. Cash-strapped, Russia suffers dwindling domestic defense market and loss of government subsidies. Analysts say Russian economy compromises Moscow's ability to control what weapons and technology get exported to potential adversaries.

4

### NORTH CYPRUS

**Threat to peace:** Turkish armed forces hold largest-ever military maneuvers in and around divided Cyprus, including a bombing raid on a mock S-300 anti-aircraft missile site. Turkish leaders promise pre-emptive strike if air defense system is delivered to Cyprus under \$600 million deal with Russia. Turkish officials said exercises not to diminish 3 Nov. pledge by Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz and Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis to forgo military solutions to longstanding territorial disputes.

5

### SAUDI ARABIA

**More howitzers:** Government requests availability on \$2 billion package of Paladin M109A6 self-propelled howitzers from United Defense L.P., of Arlington, VA. Defense experts say move reflects military's intent to reverse acute artillery shortage. South African President Nelson Mandela signs arms deal with Saudi Arabia allowing for purchase of South African G6, to round out Saudi Arabia's need for more wheeled artillery.

6

### JORDAN

**Pressuring Russia:** Jordanian leaders lobby Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov to end new arms ties with Syria, citing concerns of terrorists and struggling Middle East peace process. Primakov visits Jordan to convince regional governments Moscow should have bigger role in brokering regional Middle East peace process.

7

### TURKEY

**Kurdish infighting:** Turkish security zone in northern Iraq stymied by infighting among rival Kurdish groups in Iraq. Infighting threatens to drag Turkish military further into factious ethnic regional battles.



15

### JAPAN

**New missile system:** Japan embarks on plan to build regional missile defense network with U.S. technology, fearing threat of Korean and Chinese missiles. Defense officials will consider Standard-LEAP anti-missiles on aegis destroyers as mobile missile defense platforms and land-based system of THAADs.

16

### COLOMBIA

**One-vote elections:** Rebels disrupt 26 Oct. elections. Shut down much of road network with bombs, destroy seven power pylons in three provinces. Mayors elected by a single vote in some rural towns. • **U.S. helicopters:** U.S. officials say helicopters provided to help in drug war could be used against rebels working with traffickers.

12

### ANGOLA

**Quiet War:** UN observers report new minefields, ransacked towns and thousands of refugees on the move as "quiet war" continues for control of key diamond-mining regions. Government and UNITA troops march into unguarded areas. UN pressures UNITA rebels to comply with peace accords, threatening sanctions. • **Mavinga:** UNITA turns over town of Mavinga to government.

17

### SIERRA LEONE

**Army headquarters bombed:** Nigerian plane bombs Sierra Leonean Army headquarters, killing six, wounding 38, destroying building. Junta troops attack Nigerian base. Regional leaders meet with Junta vice-chairman Sankoh to give conditions for resuming talks.

World Sitrep is compiled in part from the biweekly newsletter *For Your Eyes Only: An Open Intelligence Summary of Current Military Affairs*. Published by Tiger Publications (P.O. Box 8759, Dept. SOF, Amarillo, Texas 79114-8759); subscriptions are \$70 per year (26 issues), \$74.38 in Texas. Sample issue available for \$3. Those interested in world intel are encouraged to subscribe.

# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

## OOPS OPS!

The rifle being fired by *SOF*'s John Walker in the October issue of this column was incorrectly ID'd: It is a .223 Ultra-Match from Olympic Arms, sporting Bushnell's excellent new 4-16x Elite designed by Bushnell's tech wonk, Dr. Bill Cross.

## GET SEEN/RESCUED!

The axiomatic rule for rescue is, rescuers have to *find* you if you are to be rescued. And ultimately they must *see* you. The usual devices for making yourself known include radio beacons, flashing lights, flares, smoke and mirrors. Odds are overwhelming that when you are located, it will be from the air.

Radio beacons and flashing lights are subject to the shelf life of their power source. Flares and smoke canisters are one-shot affairs, and you have to be awake and alert to incoming aircraft to deploy them in a timely fashion. They are also subject to the limitations of their shelf life.

Obviously, there is need for a rescue signaling device that has an indefinite shelf life and that once deployed stays deployed until you are rescued. As a bonus, it should be inexpensive, lightweight and compact, suitable for deployment on land, water or

snow — and simple enough a little kid could do it.

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## SHARP AND HANDY COLT

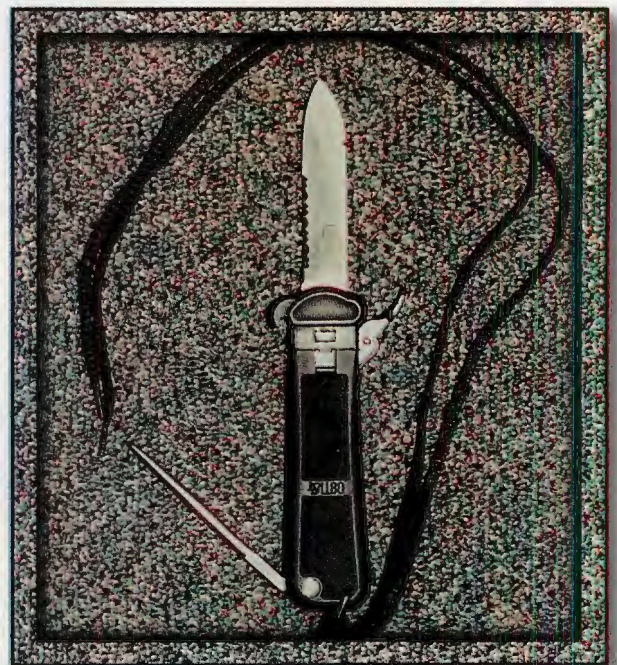
Colt's has recently introduced their new CSAR (Colt Search And Rescue) gravity knife, custom made for them by Eickhorn of Solingen. Neither Colt nor Eickhorn need an introduction, and the basic design of the gravity knife has been around since WWII. The CSAR, however, is worth some comment. Quite often when you need a knife, you need it quickly, and often as not you already have one hand tied up, especially in a search-and-rescue or EMT situation. Of the available one-hand knives, it's hard to beat the classic WWII German-paratrooper design.

The CSAR takes this classic design to the next plateau by refining the design, and the use of the best available materials. The blade is stainless steel, the awl/probe is non-magnetic steel, and the scales are fiber-glass reinforced synthetic. The half-serrated blade also has a wire-stripping notch, and there is a bottle opener that also serves as a hilt. It comes with a polyester thong.

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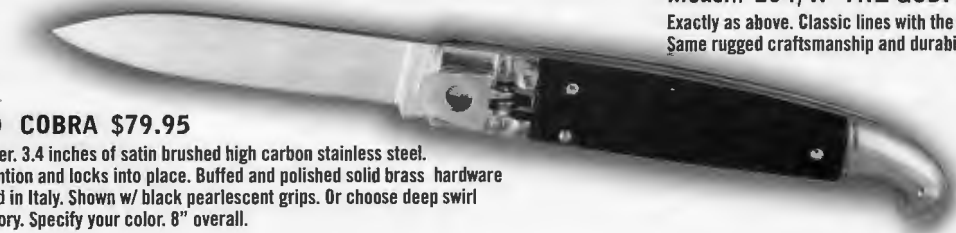
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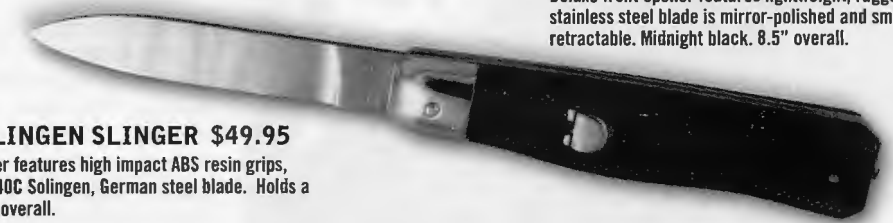
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# Spies, Lies and Computer Tapes

## Did Army Scientists Sell Out To Beijing?

by James L. Pate

**R**owdy was the rule that balmy summer night in Hong Kong's Red Pepper restaurant. New Zealand's national rugby team, chowing down on the renowned Szechuan cuisine, set a ram-bunctious tone as they engaged in loud horseplay between tables. Rugby fans, eager to join in the team's celebration, were being turned away at the door of the crowded night spot.

Seated at a round table near the bar in the main dining area downstairs, five casually dressed civilian employees of the U.S. Army Research Laboratory (ARL) in Maryland found the boisterous atmosphere infectious, ordering round after round of Chinese beer after finishing their meal. The five men were on an official trip "to investigate the state of computing and informa-

tion system development in the Pacific Rim," according to an ARL press release.

Almost three years later, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Defense Intelligence Agency have launched counter-intelligence probes into allegations of espionage at ARL, including the possibility that ballistic missile technology was leaked or sold to such countries as Iraq and China. One of the primary focuses of their inquiries is what occurred on that trip, and particularly what was allegedly said at dinner in Hong Kong that night, 27 March 1995.

ARL's team dined at the Red Pepper at the midpoint of a three-week tour to meet with scientists, engineers and academics in Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia. The trip, ARL reported, "will

have repercussions in the years to come."

That statement proved ironically prophetic.

That trip's team leader is now one of at least two senior ARL scientists under scrutiny by the FBI and DIA for the alleged unauthorized transfer of sensitive weapons data from the ARL's classified supercomputers at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

### Hobnobbing And Free-Lancing?

A third scientist, who sat next to the team leader at dinner that night in Hong Kong, was fired this past September for a security breach last summer in which he allegedly allowed foreign agents into a classified supercomputer area at ARL's headquarters in Adelphi, Maryland. That civilian scientist, who confirmed his firing to *Soldier Of Fortune*, had been part of the technology transfer office in ARL's International Programs Branch. He had a Top Secret security clearance, according to official Army documents obtained by *SOF*.

The fired ARL employee allegedly allowed Israelis to roam unsupervised in a highly restricted area, said one Justice Department source familiar with the investigation. The supercomputers accessible in that area, the source said, are repositories for, among other valuable things, classified data on ballistic missile fuzing and various types of sophisticated weapons and navigational radars. The Israelis were seeking data on sensitive ultra-wideband radars and GPS ballistic missile fuzing, the source said.

That scientist "gave away the keys to the store," he said. No criminal charges have been filed as of this writing, however — but the alleged security breach is also under investigation by Army counterintelligence agents, and by its Criminal Investigation Division.

Randi Vachon, an ARL public affairs official, denied in an Associated Press report that the scientist's firing and the FBI counterintelligence investigation arising from the Pacific Rim trip are related. Several calls to Vachon by *SOF* have not been returned.

But sources in the Pentagon, the DoJ and on Capitol Hill, who spoke only on the con-



Sophisticated base-bleed and other advanced artillery technologies developed by Bull, such as for this 155mm prototype apparently based on a NORICUM gun, proved to be of wide interest: After having worked with U.S. Army, Bull was convicted of exporting technology to then-embargoed South Africa.

Adam Pike Fiesmer



Third model Supergun by prodigal Canadian ordnance genius Gerald W. Bull illustrates highly ingenious, cost-effective method for launching ballistic projectiles into space — or into neighboring countries. Bull's technology, and apparently his contacts at Army Research Lab, would later find their way into foreign hands.

dition of anonymity, say the firing of the ARL civilian, who was eligible for retirement, and the FBI's counterintelligence probe, *are* related. Although initially coincidental in nature, the two separate cases quickly overlapped, the sources said.

### A Common Thread

The common thread to these counterintelligence investigations is the alleged transfer of sensitive and, in some cases, classified U.S. weapons technology to the People's Republic of China, Iraq and Israel, much of it supposedly related to ballistic missiles. The buying and selling of state-of-the-art weapons technology is a murky and sometimes treacherous world in which national interests, or traditional political alliances and enmities, do not always apply.

Israel, for instance, the closest U.S. ally in the Middle East, is suspected of selling U.S. military technology to China, the Pentagon's most powerful potential military adversary since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

China, in turn, has sold ballistic missile technology to one of Israel's most bitter enemies, Iran. China sold Iran its Silkworm missile in the 1980s, and more recently, its C802 missile. (The Clinton Administration recently signed a deal with China in which the U.S. will allow U.S. contractors to build nuclear reactors for ostensibly peaceful purposes in China in return for China's pledge not to sell any more C802 missiles to Iran.)

The nexus of the FBI and DIA probes is ARL's supercomputers at Aberdeen Proving

Ground and at nearby Adelphi. Although under an Army command, ARL's supercomputers also have been used by the Navy and Air Force, Copley News Service reported, and "are considered to be the most sophisticated military computers for calculations involving missile guidance systems. Anyone with access could obtain highly classified information about the administration's most advanced weapons systems."

The Copley story quoted an unnamed DIA agent as saying that the Pentagon believes technology used in China's sophisticated C802 missile may contain a guidance system and other electronics which were designed using classified data pilfered from the Army supercomputers at Aberdeen and Adelphi. The C802 is of particular interest to the U.S. intelligence community because its latest version is a ship-to-ship cruise missile that flies about 40 feet off the water and is reportedly capable of penetrating the U.S. Navy's state-of-the-art Aegis missile defense system.

U.S. intelligence agencies have been trying to obtain one of the missiles to disassemble and analyze for its technological origins. The C802 presents an "extremely serious danger" to U.S. Navy ships, Copley's DIA source was quoted as saying.

The U.S. counterintelligence probe into the origins of China's C802 technology was separate from the inquiries that grew out of the fateful dinner in Hong Kong's Red Pepper restaurant. But they coincidentally overlapped with the suspicion by DIA

investigators that ARL's supercomputers may have a role in the C802 case.

### Rational Fears

The Pacific Rim trip, one of several by ARL teams led by the same man, became a matter of concern to the FBI and the Army after one of the scientists who dined at the Red Pepper that night, Kurt D. Fickie, reported his suspicions of wrongdoing to federal law enforcement agencies and the Department of Army Inspector General. Fickie was a former Army major who became the civilian employee heading ARL's manufacturing simulation branch in the command's High Performance Computing Directorate.

"I fear the nuclear bomb code called 'CTH' has already been smuggled to China," Fickie wrote to Lieutenant General Jared Bates, then the Army's Inspector General (DAIG), in a letter dated 18 December 1995.

Fickie's reference was not to codes for launching a nuclear weapon, or even designing one, but instead is a performance code that describes the effects of various types of nuclear warheads of certain yields and under certain conditions. They are of value in that any nation which could obtain such codes would be spared years of experimentation and millions of dollars in development costs.

Fickie, a supercomputer prodigy who was routinely used by ARL to demonstrate its Cray supercomputers to visiting dignitaries, told Bates he was writing "to ascer-



tain whether your office has notified the FBI about allegations of criminal activity among high-ranking officials" at ARL.

"I would like to assume some form of investigation has been initiated and that the transfer of U.S. military technology has been thwarted," Fickie wrote. "The evidence seems to indicate otherwise. For example, I notice that the two agents from Communist China [which Fickie named] are still operating without interference at ARL facilities. These operatives work directly for" [the Pacific Rim team leader now under investigation].

Among other allegations communicated by Fickie up the chain of command and to federal agencies such as the FBI and U.S. Customs is that computations critical to improving the accuracy and extending the range of Iraq's SCUD missiles were performed by the same team leader and another senior ARL scientist on the lab's top-secret Cray 2 supercomputer in 1988-90 (see "The Mother of All Cover-ups," *SOF*, December '97).

For its part, the Army reacted with a shoot-the-messenger attitude. Fickie and three colleagues who backed up his allegations — Timothy Rohaly and two brothers, Michael and Mitchell Ortwein — were fired.

### Justice Delayed ... Or Denied?

Although two subsequent investigations by the Army Materiel Command, to which ARL belongs, determined that their bosses falsified charges and otherwise abused their authority to wrongly fire the four scientists, the whistle-blowers have yet to be re-instated or otherwise compensated. Fickie has a claim pending before the Merit Systems Protection Board, an administrative law court designed to protect the legal interests of civil servants.

Excluding the espionage allegations, every accusation made by Fickie and the others has been acknowledged in subsequent investigations by commands above ARL, including Fickie's charge that the Pacific Rim team leader, using his government passport and while on official travel orders, smuggled thousands of dollars worth of jewelry, precious gems and camera equipment back from Pacific Rim trips.

The man has since acknowledged smuggling on at least three occasions while traveling on Army business to the Pacific Rim, but he and others accused by Fickie of wrongdoing remain on the job. As Fickie pointed out in his letter to the DAIG, since the allegations were raised the same man's "access to highly classified materials has been enhanced."

### Same Piper, Different Tunes

The smuggling has been confirmed by U.S. Customs sources and is acknowledged in various government documents. The Pentagon has refused to release a report on the latest probe by the DAIG, or to discuss the case, except to confirm that the espionage allegations were referred to the FBI.



In 1962, Bull (right) worked with Canada's McGill University, opening high-altitude research station at their Barbados research institute to pioneer Bull's ideas of firing atmospheric vehicles from ground-mounted "superguns." Here Bull and Dean D. L. Mordell of engineering department examine prototype.



Bull discusses one of his superguns with former Quebec Premier Jean Lesage. By 1965 Bull had built "superguns" for high-altitude research at McGill University's space research center in Highwater, Quebec, would subsequently have research facility spanning U.S.-Canadian border, do pioneering research for Pentagon, ARL and others before his fall from grace on criminal charges of aiding an embargoed South Africa.

Colonel Osborne K. Walls Jr., chief of the DAIG's investigative division, told U.S. Sen. John McCain in a letter last October that the Army is taking Fickie's allegations seriously and that yet another formal investigation is underway. "That investigation was given a high priority and is ongoing," Walls wrote.

Eleven months earlier, in response to a request for information by McCain on Fickie's behalf, Walls told the Arizona senator a different story: Fickie's allegation that ARL scientists "improperly transferred weapons technology to foreign agents was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The investigation established that the offense of wrongful transfer of sen-

sitive military technology did not occur as alleged. The FBI has declined to pursue criminal sanctions ..."

Despite Walls' assertion to Sen. McCain in that first letter of 19 November 1996, an FBI spokesman later said that, at that time, its agents had barely begun their investigation, and had not cleared anyone accused by Fickie.

In July 1996, the Army made another attempt to dismiss out of hand Fickie's espionage accusations. Unnamed senior Army officials were cited in an Associated Press story that reported that "the FBI has sent the Army a letter saying its preliminary investigation has found no substance to the charges" of espionage made by Fickie and his three former colleagues.

The Army's claim was immediately denied by an FBI spokesman, and two months later, the FBI shifted the investigation from its criminal to counterintelligence division. The Pentagon, meanwhile, denied a request by *Soldier Of Fortune* and ABC News, to produce a copy of the purported FBI letter.

Officials at ARL, meanwhile, have refused to say anything on the record to *SOF* or ABC, which aired a segment about Fickie's case on its *20/20* broadcast of 20 November. While she has commented on the record to the AP, ARL press flack Randi Vachon, whose job it is to speak on the record about news concerning ARL, has refused to do so.

Privately, she and other ARL officials stand steadfastly behind the men accused by Fickie of wrongdoing. They point out that, while Fickie completed his doctoral work at the California Institute of Technology, he was not awarded a doctoral degree, and implied that he was fired, in part, for falsifying his credentials.

Fickie said he did complete his doctoral work and defended his doctoral thesis, but was called up for Army reserve duty before all the official paperwork was complete, resulting in a bureaucratic snafu that short-circuited the award of his Ph.D.

(A Cal Tech spokesman confirmed that Fickie completed his doctoral work and defended his thesis, but declined further comment.)

### Strategy: Discredit Your Accuser

The official ARL position is that Fickie is a "disgruntled former employee" who falsified charges against his bosses in retaliation for being fired. But every accusation made by Fickie that has been addressed in publicly available reports, including that of smuggling, has been verified. His espionage allegations have not been addressed in any of these documents, however.

And in contrast to Army officials at ARL and the Pentagon, practically every statement made by Fickie, and the other three former ARL employees who backed him up, has been made in officially sworn government documents, signed under penalty of perjury. To knowingly make a false state-

ment on such a document is a felony. No one in the Army has made any move to take action against Fickie or the others for making false statements.

Fickie's dispute with the Army is complicated by the fact that the official sworn statements requesting Inspector General action were made after his bosses initiated disciplinary action against him. They suspended his security clearance and locked him and the three colleagues who supported them out of their offices, confiscating the contents and personal belongings of each.

But Fickie made yet another sworn statement, asking that ARL's higher command, the Army Materiel Command (AMC), investigate his claim that his bosses falsified documents and made false statements to justify their disciplinary actions.

"The ... evidence substantiating the allegations against selected ARL officials was preponderant and compelling," the report's findings state. But the 600-page report also said it was not in the Army's interests to investigate further.

"An additional investigation at this time ... would be disadvantageous," it said. "Mr. Rohaly and Dr. Fickie have claimed ARL deliberately impeded their due process through dragging out their investigations. Requiring a follow-on investigation would possibly reinforce their claim of government slothfulness."

### Customs' Investigation

Although Fickie had not reported his suspicions up the Army's chain of command



UNIDPI by H. Arvidsson

**Rumors of Bull's long-range artillery work for Iraq, bolstered by confiscation of various components and modules in England and Greece, were confirmed when this unfinished 300mm "supergun" was discovered at Jabal Hamrayn, Iraq in 1991. Having pioneered such weapons under Canadian and U.S. auspices, Bull's expertise was much sought by powers such as China, Iraq, Iran.**

until after ARL initiated disciplinary action against him, he had reported suspected wrongdoing to U.S. Customs after returning from the trip that included the dinner at Hong Kong's Red Pepper restaurant.

This was on 18 April 1995, four months before his security clearance was suspended and he was locked out of his office. Fickie contacted the U.S. Customs office in Baltimore and made known his suspicions that his team leader from the Pacific Rim trip was smuggling and had possibly provided sensitive military technology to foreign governments.

Fickie's suspicions of wrongdoing went

back even further, to the 1988-90 time frame. He said he noticed "something odd" at the lab when he and others tried unsuccessfully to log on to the Cray supercomputers. They were repeatedly pre-empted by the same man who led the Pacific Rim trip. It was odd, he said, because senior staffers seldom made computer runs themselves, but assigned subordinates to conduct such tasks. Yet the senior scientist, Fickie claims, was logging thousands of hours of supercomputer time.

The types of calculations being run were also unusual, Fickie noted: "They were stability calculations of liquid-filled missiles that would have liquid payloads," Fickie said. Such calculations would be necessary if someone were building ballistic tables to target a new missile, he said.

Fickie said he later came to a startling realization that the "calculations performed on the supercomputers ... at Aberdeen were being used to increase the accuracy of Iraqi SCUD missiles, and their heavy artillery," Fickie wrote in his letter to Lt.Gen. Bates, now retired.

Liquid-filled warheads are most often associated with chemical or biological warfare agents. The U.S. Army was phasing out such weapons at that time. Nor did the U.S. arsenal contain any liquid-fueled missiles. All U.S. ballistic missiles use a solid propellant. But Iraq does use liquid-fueled missiles: the SCUD-B. And Saddam Hussein's willingness to use chemical and biological warfare agents was graphically demonstrated when he used them against his own citizens, the Kurds, during Iraq's war with Iran.

Although he acknowledges that he wasn't as certain what the calculations were for at the time in 1988-90, he was suspicious enough to download the user logs and store backup tapes in his desk — documents later confiscated.

The Army denies that such calculations were run. Except for a brief three-month period, the Army also said the user logs for that time-period have been destroyed. But the 600-page AMC-IG report contains references from witnesses that appear to bolster Fickie's claim that he had downloaded the logs and assembled other evidence of suspected wrongdoing.

### It Never Happened ... Because We've Got The Evidence

The search of Fickie's office, ordered by one of the same men accused by Fickie of espionage, "was designed to look for backup computer tapes and find information ... Fickie might have removed from the computer files," one witness who conducted the search told Army investigators. Another said they were told to look for "files being kept on individuals."

But it wasn't until the dinner in Hong Kong that Fickie said his various suspi-



**Bull was also the International Man To See to develop long-range missiles. Credited in British press as having helped develop Chinese Silkworm, Bull also let contract through his "Space Research Corporation" to sell Chinese U.S. Army-developed Modified Point Mass trajectory computer programs — which he apparently got from entrepreneurial scientists at ARL. Evidence also suggests computer work was done at ARL on behalf of Iraq to extend range of their Scud B missiles, such as this one shot down over Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, by Patriot missile.**

AP/Wide World

cions "crystallized."

Fickie, who weighs 140 pounds and was the smallest of the five men at dinner at the Red Pepper, had two beers, one before and one during dinner. But as they watched in amusement at the raucous antics of New Zealand's rugby players, the ARL team lingered long after eating as the other four, all tall, burly men, consumed round after round of Chinese brew.

The conversation, as Fickie recalls it, drifted from University of Maryland sports to the upcoming transfer of power in Hong Kong to the communist government of mainland China. Then it turned to technology transfer.

"My anxiety grew after a chance comment from [the team leader] after he had too much to drink," Fickie later reported in his sworn statement to the I.G. "I do not remember the exact remark, but the gist was that he saw a private business opportunity with Singapore much like the arrangement he had with a company called Advanced Technology Institute."

### The China Connection

The ARL group was headed to Singapore the next day. Suddenly it dawned on Fickie: Their China connection was Dr. Gerald V. Bull, the Canadian rocket science and artillery genius, a one-time Army contractor who later became a rogue arms dealer.

Fickie was familiar with Bull through Bull's many professional contacts and personal friendships among senior ARL scientists. Fickie had attended a lecture given by Bull at ARL. And Fickie knew that Advanced Technology Institute, or ATI, was a shell company that Bull had founded in Athens, Greece.

Both scientists accused by Fickie had connections to Bull, whose connections to the U.S. Army date back to the late 1950s. Among other projects, he performed contract work on nuclear missiles for the U.S. government, and worked on the Minuteman missile project for the U.S. Army. He is best known, though, for his High Altitude Research Program, or HARP, a joint effort between Canada and the Pentagon to use Bull-designed "supercannon" to shoot projectiles into the upper atmosphere. HARP's ultimate goal, to use such a gun to shoot satellites into earth orbit at a fraction of the cost of using a rocket, was never achieved.

Although Bull never got the contractual largess from the Pentagon that he long sought, he was rewarded for his work for the U.S. military with a special bill in congress that awarded the Canadian U.S. citizenship.

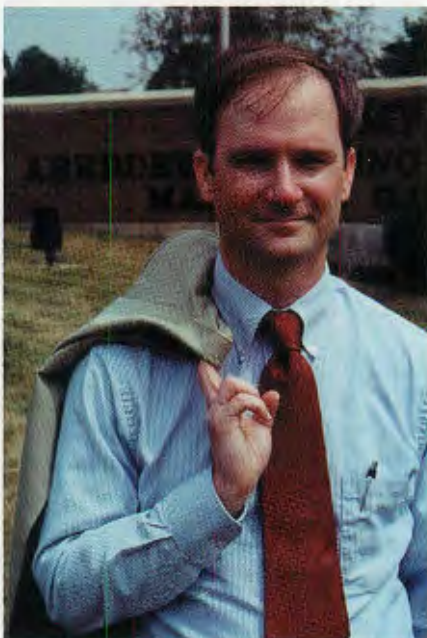
Bull's relationship with the Pentagon soured, however, after he was sentenced to federal prison for designing long-range artillery for South Africa's apartheid regime, then under an arms and trade embargo. Bull claimed his work for South Africa was undertaken at the behest of the Central Intelligence Agency, to aid South Africa's support of Jonas Savimbi's losing battle against superior enemy artillery in Angola.



James L. Pate

**Paris-based Libyan arms dealer Sarkis Soghanalian, then operating from Miami, received much of Iraq's \$30 billion arms business during the 1980s — and ran afoul of U.S. government (his record was later expunged). Interviewed in Paris, where he is "more or less retired," he corroborated for *SOF* the identity of ARL scientists — accused by Fickie and Curtis — as having been together in Geneva and Baghdad.**

Evidence later emerged that the work for South Africa by Bull's company, Space Research Corporation (another shell company, this one incorporated in the Channel Islands), had the tacit approval at the highest levels of U.S. government. Former head of the CIA's Angola task force, John Stockwell, said the South Africa deal was endorsed by the spy agency's Africa division, but was scotched by diplomats. But testimony was heard by the federal grand jury investigating Bull and his company that the deal included



James L. Pate

**Former Army computer whiz Kurt D. Fickie noted thousands of unusual computer hours logged on \$25 million Cray 2 supercomputer at the Army Research Lab — calculations compatible with ballistic studies for liquid-fuel rockets carrying liquid payloads. Fickie was sacked after he blew the whistle on suspected irregularities involving Army's Cray supercomputer, and improper liaison between foreign agents, ARL scientists.**

participation on some level by a U.S. Marine Corps officer assigned to work for the CIA in Angola and a retired U.S. Air Force officer living in Brussels, Belgium, who was a CIA-approved arms dealer with a secret clearance.

### Evidently Orbiting In High Circles

A trial potentially embarrassing to the federal government was avoided when a plea bargain brokered directly by the Justice Department, above the head of the U.S. attorney in Vermont, was accepted by Bull and a single co-defendant.

Larry Curtis, the U.S. Customs agent who assembled the case against Bull, told *SOF* in July that he was told the deal was cut on orders "from the White House" and effectively derailed plans to seek charges against 14 others, including an ARL scientist that Curtis said had a peripheral role in the South Africa case. That man is one of two ARL employees who would later be accused by Fickie of espionage.

When Bull got out of federal prison in early 1981, he bitterly renounced his relations with Canada and the U.S., moving to Brussels, where he re-established his Space Research Corporation. Among his first two clients were Iraq and the People's Republic of China. Bull was subsequently found assassinated in his Brussels apartment building in March 1990, at the hand of persons unknown — two .32 slugs in his neck and 16,000 British pounds sterling in his pocket.

Curtis said he was unaware at the time of Bull's work for Iraq, but that he opened an investigation into Bull's dealings with China. That investigation was ordered shut down, Curtis said, and when he continued to pursue leads, U.S. Customs tried unsuccessfully to get Curtis fired. But a classified CIA document obtained by *SOF* suggests the federal government was well aware of Bull's activities in China and wanted to keep that knowledge secret. British press sources credited Bull with having helped develop the Chinese Silkworm missile. Curtis later retired in disillusionment, he said. He died of lung cancer at his Vermont home several weeks after he was interviewed by *SOF*.

Bull became close friends in China with Tsien Hsue-Shen, also known as Qian Xuesen. Tsien, a professor at the East China Institute of Technology in Nanjing, was the designer of China's Silkworm missile and was closely associated with China's late premier, Deng Xiaopeng.

China's interest in obtaining U.S. military technology was evident, even then, and is mentioned in an official ARL history. For example, the book, published by the Army, mentions work by ARL on a computer program called the Modified Point Mass model, or MPM model.

Modified Point Mass model is described in the book as "the workhorse for trajectory calculations ... the primary method of trajectory simulation used in the preparation of firing tables ... a method of modeling the aerodynamic drag of base-burn projectiles

with as much similarity as possible ...”

The MPM code is used to compute the design of a base-bleed propellant charge used to get the hyper-extended artillery ranges for which Bull’s research was famous. Bull made artillery projectiles more aerodynamic and designed and perfected the base-bleed concept.

Base-bleed artillery rounds are redesigned at their base, which is modified to screw off. One compartment is for warhead and fuse, and the other, which is in the shell’s base, is for the base bleed propellant, which is usually doughnut-shaped. The doughnut-shaped propellant burns gradually as the round flies toward its target, “bleeding” gas into the vacuum created by the shell’s forward motion, thus reducing drag and increasing range.

### MPM Technology As A Commodity

Although much research was done by ARL on the base-bleed concept, which was perfected by Bull, it has not seen wide use in U.S. artillery systems. It is a key component, however, of the superior artillery systems Bull designed for South Africa, Iraq and China. And, according to a copy of Bull’s contract with China’s People’s Liberation Army, the MPM model mentioned in the ARL history was one of the specific computer programs required in Bull’s contract with China in 1983.

“The MPM model ... has quite an international appeal” the ARL history notes. “The MPM model was the one thing the Chinese most wanted to discuss” with a visiting ARL scientist in 1988.

So when Bull’s shell corporation, ATI, was mentioned at dinner in Hong Kong, “the hair stood up on the back of my neck,”

Fickie said. “My jaw must have dropped ... Suddenly, I knew what the real purpose of the trip was.”

Fickie said his suspicion only increased in the next two days, when the ARL team visited Singapore, where they visited the National University of Singapore. Fickie said the Chinese scientists there were less eager to talk about computer networking than about blast codes, something the ARL group had been told in a counterintelligence briefing not to discuss.

The U.S. military attache, a Colonel Welker, seemed anxious about the exact nature of the ARL delegation’s visit. He “refused to speak in our hotel rooms,” Fickie wrote in one report to the IG, and “preferred discussing business inside the embassy or surrounded by open areas like parks.”

Other odd things occurred while in Singapore, Fickie said. He left his driver’s license and military ID in his suitcase in his room. When he searched the luggage for it, it was missing.

### Investigations Continue, Memories Fade

But Fickie’s version of the Hong Kong dinner conversation may be hard to prove. Of the three men seated with him and the team leader, one said he could not recall any of what was discussed that night. He could not remember being on the trip until told that *SOF* had obtained copies of travel documents confirming his presence. He is the same man under investigation for allegedly allowing Israelis into one of ARL’s super-computer labs.

Of the remaining two men at the table that night, one declined to comment, referring questions to ARL’s public affairs



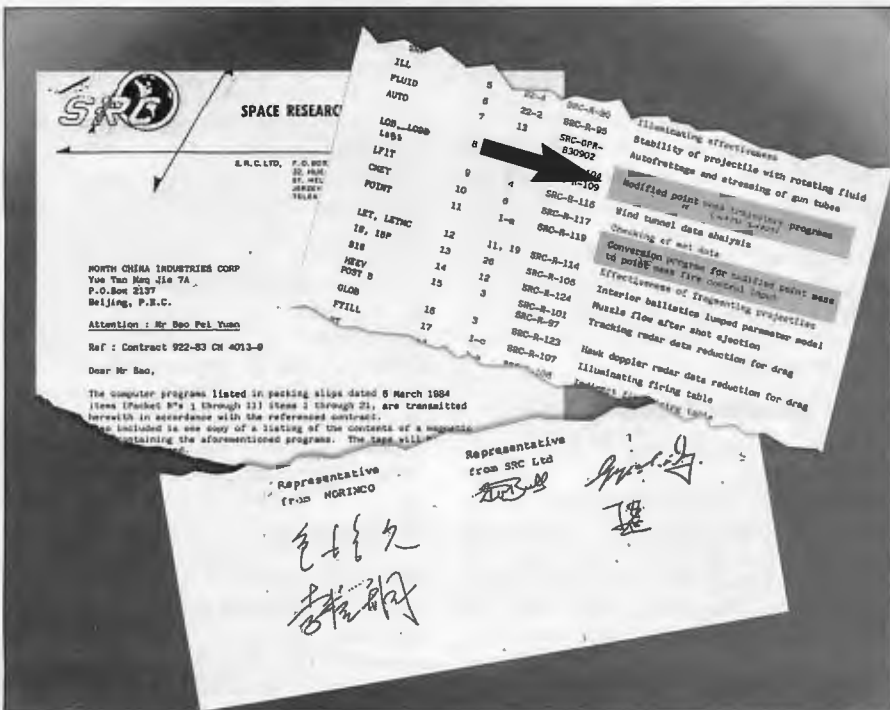
Naomi Bull with her husband’s casket after Montreal funeral following his assassination in Brussels, March 1990. A man whose talents were much sought and much used, Bull could have been killed by either a master or a client. Contemporary speculation included British MI6 or the CIA (then on contract to Iraq, Bull could have blown cover on a nuke-smuggling sting against Iraq), or Iraq (suspicious of his new dealings with Iran), the Israeli Mossad (intent on keeping Saddam from acquiring nukes), or any of many shady arms dealers who thought Bull was involved in a double-cross or sting.

office. The other man, who retired from government service about two weeks after the trip, could not be reached for comment.

Fickie said he tried to deal with his suspicions “in a way least harmful to the Army.” He decided that if the boss he suspected of wrongdoing were arrested for smuggling, he would be effectively neutralized. Fickie declined to go on the next Pacific Rim trip, which occurred in August 1995. It was the same itinerary, visiting the same locations. Based on instructions he received from U.S. Customs four months earlier, he informed the agents of the date and time of the team’s return to the United States in Honolulu.

Four days before their return, though, Fickie decided he should let the ARL command know that one of its scientists was about to be detained by Customs. Apparently tipped off, the man flew home earlier, by a different route. Later confronted by Customs agents from Baltimore, he admitted to three separate instances of smuggling while on government travel. He was fined and his merchandise was returned.

Fickie, on the other hand, and everyone who stood by him, have been fired — stuck in legal limbo while government investigators continue to sort out the China connections and “repercussions for years to come.”



Contract between Gerald Bull’s shell company SRC Ltd. and NORINCO specifies Bull will deliver to them the MPM computer codes developed at ARL.

# NUKES IN

# NAM

**Where Is The  
People's Plutonium?**

**by Dale Andradé**  
Photos courtesy John Horan

For 21 years Hanoi has sat secretly on a batch of plutonium, the deadly byproduct of atomic fission that's used in the trigger mechanisms of atom bombs. "Secretly" may be a strong word considering that the United States left it there for Hanoi to pick up. It isn't much — reportedly around 80 grams — but until early 1997, nobody knew about it.

Vietnam's nuclear past began in 1959 when the United States signed an agreement with South Vietnam under the "Atoms for Peace Program," a scheme dreamed up by the United States to tout the future of cheap atomic energy to the rest of the world. South Vietnam, at the time a relatively peaceful country under the rule of President Ngo Dinh Diem, seemed the perfect place to build a reactor. That same year, Kaiser Engineers of Oakland, Calif., began building a General Atomics Mark 11 research reactor in the little town of Dalat. Work was completed in 1962 at a cost of \$750,000.

## **Nukes In A Peaceful Mountain Town**

Dalat was, and is, a pleasant resort city about 170 miles northeast of Saigon. Sitting on a plateau almost a mile high, crisscrossed with mountain streams and pine forests, Dalat has attracted the rich and famous of Vietnamese society for centuries.

Aside from attracting rich tourists and

vacationing politicians, Dalat also became a favored academic setting. By the 1950s Dalat was home to the South Vietnamese Military Academy, Dalat University, and the Pasteur Institute, a modern scientific complex dedicated to developing vaccines.

When war came to South Vietnam, Dalat remained aloof. In the early 1960s the emerging Viet Cong insurgency stayed away, and during the American buildup of 1965 and 1966 the fighting bypassed the peaceful town. War finally became a reality in 1968. During the lunar new year celebrations known as Tet, Viet Cong forces emerged from the shadows of what was formerly a guerrilla war, launching attacks on every major town across the country. Dalat was not spared.

## **Reactor Survives Tet**

Early on the morning of 1 February, under a barrage of mortar fire, a company from the 186<sup>th</sup> Viet Cong Battalion crashed into town, quickly taking the southwestern sector and then the town center, known as Hog Binh Square. Since American troops were busy elsewhere during the Tet Offensive, the Dalat counterattack was mostly a South Vietnamese affair. The reactor itself and nearby Dalat University, both more than a mile northeast of the main fighting, were never taken by the Viet Cong.

The Dalat reactor survived virtually

unscathed, but the implications of the Viet Cong attack on Dalat were clear. In the United States, nuclear scientists concerned about future attacks urged Washington to remove the nuclear material. One of these scientists was Arnold Kramish, the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC) chief analyst for nuclear proliferation from 1947 to 1951. "I urged Washington to shut down the reactor," recalls Kramish.

Military officials in Saigon and Washington needed little coaxing, though it was political rather than radioactive fallout they feared. The consensus was that "radioactive hazard from the reactor would be negligible," but "the public relations consequences of such damage could be major ..." On 21 August 1968, U.S. and South Vietnamese officials agreed upon deactivation of the Dalat reactor and established a working group to oversee the "deactivation, transportation and safe storage of the nuclear fuel." It was removed sometime in late 1968 or early '69.

According to Kramish, they turned right around and put it all back. "The Atomic Energy Commission did not like what we had done," he says. "They thought that removal of the fuel sent the wrong signal — it said that we didn't trust the South Vietnamese."

So the nuclear material sat in Dalat. It remained through the continuing North

Vietnamese offensives of '68, through the beginnings of the U.S. troop drawdown in '69, the incursions into Cambodia and Laos in '70 and '71, even through the massive North Vietnamese "Easter Offensive" of '72. As the Americans bargained their way out of Vietnam at the Paris Peace Talks it was never brought up. When the last U.S. troops left South Vietnam in March of '73 no one mentioned it, and for the last two years of South Vietnam's existence it seemed that Washington had completely forgotten the plutonium.

## The End Of South Vietnam

The beginning of South Vietnam's end came in early 1975 when Hanoi launched its final offensive. North Vietnamese troops stormed down from the DMZ, slashing through the highlands in early March. Still gun shy from the '68 Tet offensive, 90% of Dalat's population — including all South Vietnamese government officials — fled town, leaving it virtually empty by 22 March.

In Saigon, Wolfgang Lehman, the embassy's deputy chief of mission, remembered the reactor. As the war spun out of control in early March, he voiced his concerns about the nuclear fuel, especially the plutonium. Since no one at the reactor, Vietnamese or American, was qualified to remove the fuel rods from their lead-lined containers, each buried in four-story deep wells of distilled water, help had to come from the United States. Memos flashed between Saigon and Washington with a warning of "the political repercussions that could arise should the fuel fall into North Vietnamese hands."

Two scientists from the Energy Research and Development Administration (the predecessor of the Energy Department) office in Idaho Falls volunteered to go. Wally Hendrickson and John Horan, both nuclear technicians, had no idea what to expect.

Hendrickson and Horan flew to Dalat on Easter Sunday, 30 March. They worked for two days, packing up fuel. As the North Vietnamese finally overran Dalat, their plane barely made it out.

## False Sense Of Security

At the embassy everyone breathed a sigh of relief. One problem out of the way. "We were told that they went in and got the material," recalled Indochina expert Douglas Pike, at that time an embassy official. "As far as we knew it was all done by the book."

The plane carrying the nuclear material flew to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines — escorted by Hendrickson — and then on to Johnston Atoll. In February 1976, technicians moved it to the Hanford Engineering Development Laboratory at Richland, Wash.

There it sat. Not until 4 May 1979, during a routine nuclear materials inventory, did the United States discover a serious mistake. Instruments detected decomposition of the radioactive material inside the 55-gallon drum — highly unusual considering plutonium



(left) Horan removes an enriched fuel element from the bottom of a 20-foot "swimming pool" of slightly green, radioactive distilled water. He's aided by Ton-That-Con, of the Republic of Vietnam Atomic Energy Office, and Prof. Paul Long (white hat), director of the Dalat Nuclear Research Center. (above) Horan fishes for one of 57 fuel rods he and Hendrickson removed from the Dalat nuclear research reactor. The men wore no protective gear, saying it does nothing to keep out penetrating radiation. Their only means of reducing radioactive exposure was to work fast.

remains stable for thousands of years. Technicians opened the drum and found a stainless steel canister marked "Po-2 IO," the symbol for polonium, a radioactive element used for starting the nuclear reaction process. The symbol for plutonium is Pu-240.

"Our conclusion is that the [plutonium] was never shipped from Vietnam," wrote Thomas Blankenship, the director of safeguards and security at the Energy Department's office in Las Vegas, in a July 1979 memo. The foul-up, said Blankenship, occurred because "the technicians [Hendrickson and Horan] verified the outer container description but did not conduct a neutron dose rate measurement of the container to confirm the identity of the actual material."

That same day, the Energy Department requested that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the worldwide watchdog charged with monitoring nuclear materials, modify its records "to delete shipment of plutonium source from Vietnam..." On 21 August, this was done, but someone filled out the wrong paperwork, and the IAEA never got the word. Then all documents pertaining to the screw-up were classified — "to protect the fact that the plutonium was unaccounted for," says the Energy

Department. And all was forgotten.

## Bureaucratic Hot Potato

Vietnam's plutonium is less than one-tenth the amount needed to make a bomb, but the Energy Department views any loose plutonium as a significant risk.

This was no government cover-up. Actually, Washington simply forgot about the incident. The memo came to light as part of a large Energy Department document declassification program, one of the "openness" initiatives announced by Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary before she left office. "I don't want this hyped," she said at the press conference announcing the discovery in January 1997. "We are talking about



(left) After retrieving the radioactive fuel rods, each was placed into a ½-ton cask insulated with concrete and lead. Here, Horan lowers a fuel rod with a removal tool. (above) Prof. Long and Max Prosser, of the United States Agency for International Development, inspect and empty cask. The center of each cask, known as the "glory hole," can hold up to seven fuel rods.



The casks, which weigh 2,000 pounds each when empty, were offloaded at the reactor from trucks Horan and Henderson rented from the Vietnamese military with a personal credit card. The truck rental never appeared on Horan's credit card. (above, middle) Nguyen Van Lanh lowers a cask, filled with radioactive fuels, from the reactor top to the ground floor with the help of a five ton crane. (above, right) Hendrickson (left in photo) and Horan developed fast and essential rapport with several Vietnamese who helped them remove and transport fuel and equipment from the reactor, amid the sounds of encroaching enemy gunfire. (right) Pallets of casks, containing radioactive fuel rods, wait at Cam Ly, the Dalat Airport, for a U.S. Air Force C-130. The overloaded plane delivered the fuel, Horan, Hendrickson and dozens of refugees safely to Saigon after nearly hitting a house just after takeoff.



a very small amount."

In Hanoi, officials remained mum. During October 1996, a team of U.S. scientists traveling with a State Department delegation toured the Dalat research reactor, but was not told about the plutonium. As long as the U.S. government kept the snafu quiet, Hanoi was more than willing to go along with the charade. When the Energy Department finally discovered and revealed the secret, the Vietnamese readily confessed.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Tran Quang Hoan admitted his government had the plutonium, and he subtly needled Washington for its carelessness in leaving the nuclear material behind. "The Dalat Nuclear Research Institute is currently preserving the amount of plutonium left behind by the Americans as required by technical necessity," Hoan said.

No one can say exactly when the Vietnamese realized their windfall, but

within four years of coming to power, Hanoi made clear its nuclear aspirations. Although the new government generally accepted the international obligations of the defeated South Vietnamese, Hanoi did not specifically agree to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, of which Saigon was a signatory. Then in 1978, Vietnamese officials contacted the Soviet Union and India for help in reviving the U.S. reactor. India agreed to provide Vietnam with technical assistance



John Horan and Wally Hendrickson were mild-mannered family men, working as scientists in peaceful Idaho Falls, Idaho, in 1975. Horan fought in World War II and thought he'd never again hear the sound of enemy fire closing in. Hendrickson was pure civilian — a professor with an impressive academic rap sheet, who'd never been shot at.

America's involvement in Southeast Asia was essentially over. The last thing either man expected was to land at a heavily mined Vietnam airport, buying survival gear in the black market of Saigon, dodging sniper fire and handling nuclear reactor fuel with their bare hands.

The men were middle-aged and working for the federal government's Energy Research and Development Administration (USRDA), minding their business and leading the good life.

### Poisonous Office Memo

Then came a memo from Washington, on 21 March 1975.

Someone was needed in Vietnam STAT, the memo explained, to dismantle a U.S.-built nuclear reactor in Dalat and keep its fuel away from the communists. In Vietnam, no one friendly with the United States was qualified to remove the fuel rods from the reactor core, each buried in deep wells of distilled water.

Horan and Hendrickson volunteered — a move that landed them within earshot of enemy insurgents on three sides of Dalat, with almost no support from

the U.S. Embassy or the few American troops left in the country.

Prior to the memo, Hendrickson was among a handful of Americans who even knew about the Dalat reactor, built by General Atomics in 1962. It wasn't a place that evoked warm feelings, as it had indirectly led to the death of his good Vietnamese friend Le Von Thi.

Thi had been studying under Hendrickson, as a doctoral candidate at Washington State University. He was called to Dalat in 1964 by the South Vietnamese government to work on the reactor. He was captured and killed by communists while visiting his parents in Hue City during the Tet Offensive of 1968.

For some strange reason, this little-known reactor was again playing a role in Hendrickson's life — this time threatening to end it.

And today, 22 years later, the plant still comes knocking. It became the subject of hype and media hysteria in January 1997, when outgoing Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary released information that the Horan/Hendrickson mission failed to retrieve plutonium, which may have fallen into the hands of communists or terrorists.

Three days after the memo asking for help arrived, Horan and Hendrickson were on a commercial flight to Hong Kong, where they made a connecting flight to Saigon. There, they met up with Jay Blowers, first secretary of the United States Embassy.

### Tea Time In Hell

"I figured we had about a 50-50 chance of getting home alive," said Hendrickson, 63, from his home in Richland, Wash. "The first secretary (Blowers) kept reminding us we had volunteered. He didn't want us to presume this was safe."

The men had tea with folks from the Republic of Vietnam



in building a new 100-kilowatt reactor on the site of the defunct U.S. one. Small even by research standards, Vietnam's reactor would be used, according to Hanoi's official words, "to establish nuclear medicine departments in hospitals, improve agriculture and conduct studies on the environment and industrial development." Nuclear fuel for this came from the Soviet Union.

In 1984, the Dalat reactor was up and running again. Except for a U.S.-made handling tank for spent fuel rods, little is left of the original reactor.

"We inherited some of the instruments in use today, but most of the Mark 11 reactor's equipment had to be replaced," Tran Ha Anh, director of the Dalat nuclear institute, told the Associated Press.

Now that Vietnam's possession of American plutonium is well-known, discussions about its return are ongoing. But Hanoi's cooperation does not run deep. Nguyen Tien Nguyen, director of Vietnam's Atomic Energy Commission, hinted at problems ahead when he told reporters "it



Dr. Tom Marks

Throughout most of the Vietnam War, Dalat remained a peaceful upscale mountain resort city for Southeast Asia's rich and famous.

will be very complicated once the discussion to take back the substance is raised."

In fact, Washington and Hanoi cannot even agree on how much plutonium is actually at the reactor. Energy Department records clearly show 80 grams were in the reactor when Saigon fell, but Vietnam insists there is only a fraction of that amount.

"The Vietnamese admit to seven grams of plutonium, not 80," says Roger Heusser, an official with the Energy Department's

Office of Security Affairs. "The only way to resolve this is to get the IAEA over there to take a look at it."

As a member of the IAEA, Vietnam is supposed to regularly file reports on radioactive materials in its possession. According to the Energy Department's official statement, "the United States government has recently asked the IAEA whether it has a record of a plutonium source in Vietnam. The IAEA answered affirmatively and has agreed to check whether this source is identical to that which was thought to have been transferred to the United States."

This raises an interesting question: if Hanoi regularly reported plutonium in its inventory, didn't the Energy Department wonder where it came from? Even if the Soviets gave it to them back in the 1980s that fact would show up in the IAEA reports. And since Washington knew since 1979 that 80 grams of U.S. plutonium remained in Vietnam, but Vietnam reported only seven,

*Continued on page 71*

Atomic Energy Office, including two men who had worked at the Dalat plant.

Horan and Hendrickson obtained an operating manual for the facility, and discussed its highly enriched uranium fuel elements. After tea, they met with support staff at the embassy.

"Embassy staff were very pessimistic that the mission could be performed," Horan wrote in his log of the trip.

On Thursday, 27 March, three days after the men left the United States, Horan and Hendrickson boarded an Air America twin engine Turbo Prop Beechcraft Volpar to fly from Saigon to Dalat.

"We were specifically forbidden from carrying any weapons with us," Horan, 74, said from his home in Idaho Falls. "That was an order of the U.S. Embassy, because they were allowed to have only a very small number of troops in Vietnam at that time."

To reduce the risk of communist capture, Horan and Hendrickson were told not to stay in Dalat overnight after assessing the plant. Instead, a plane from Saigon would land for a short time and pick them up.

### **Zigzagging To Dalat**

Both roads from Saigon to Dalat had been bombed, and the embassy had no idea where the Surface-to-Air battalions were between the two cities. To avoid the enemy, the plane flew south-east to Vung Tau on the Dalat Coast, then northeast over the South China Sea to Phan Rang, before turning northeast up Highway 11 for 50 miles into Dalat.

"Both sides of the runway (in Dalat) were heavily mined," Horan recalls. "The week before, an Air America DC-4 had gone off the runway on take-off. It set off several mines, and the plane was sitting there abandoned where it had stopped."

Blowers, of the embassy, escorted Horan and Hendrickson about five miles to the reactor, about three miles from the center of Dalat.

At the reactor, which Horan says hadn't been visited by an American in five years, the men were supposed to meet 15 local

guards on the U.S. payroll.

"We were told by the embassy these guards had been there for years to prevent looting," Horan said. "When we arrived, there were no guards. The gate was wide open and the place had been stripped. All the tools were gone and the battery was missing from the forklift. There was general disarray in the labs, offices and throughout the reactor building."

If there had ever been plutonium in the reactor core, Horan said, it wasn't there when they arrived. Horan says he's not sure the plant had ever been equipped with Plutonium as starter fuel, because Polonium Beryllium was a workable substitute. The men left with the Polonium Beryllium, but no plutonium.

"If there had ever been a Plutonium starter source it would have been quite simple for anyone to take it, if they knew what they were looking for," Horan said. "The place had been looted."

### **The Fuel Mix-Up**

Hendrickson says he thought the Polonium Beryllium was Plutonium. The mix up was discovered in 1979, and recorded. It became public in January, 1997, when the Energy Department conducted a major inventory of all known radioactive fuel sources.

"I made a mistake," Hendrickson said. "I was told to get the plutonium out. I got what I thought was a plutonium starter source."

Hendrickson knew some plutonium was being left behind, even though he thought he'd recovered a plutonium starter source.

"There was a small amount of plutonium outside the reactor core that was set up in a neutron howitzer to give off a stream of neutrons for experiments," Hendrickson said. "I know it was there. I saw it. I did not take it, because I did not think that was the plutonium I had been instructed to get."

The few grams intentionally left behind, Hendrickson said, is hundreds of times less than needed for a bomb. Still, he suspects

*Continued on page 72*



O

ver the last 20 years a lot of hasty money has been bet on the demise of airborne infantry, by those who see it as too light to compete in the arena of modern combat. Events continue to prove, however, that the airborne soldier is highly effective because of his diverse capabilities.

The power and portability of modern anti-tank weapons, combined with strategic and tactical flexibility, means that French airborne units can win the battle of the "first three days" even against a conventional opponent such as they might encounter on the dark continent.

The 2nd REP (*Regiment Etrangere Parachutiste* — Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment) falls under command of the French Army's 11th Airborne Division. The organization of the 2nd REP is the standard airborne infantry structure of headquarters, four rifle companies, a command and support company, a scout and heavy weapons company. The 2nd REP also has a unique and indigenous support

## Text & Photos by Yves Debay Translation by Alex McColl

and maintenance company. Each rifle company has a command section, three rifle platoons and a support platoon with two 81mm mortars and two MILAN anti-tank guided missile launchers (ATGMs).

The rifle companies comprise lightly armed airborne infantry, but the length of the legionnaire's enlistment and operational requirements have allowed them to become very specialized and disproportionately effective. This idea originated with Lieutenant Colonel Caillaud who, after the war in Algeria, understood and applied the need for specialization in modern combat. One of the fathers of French military parachuting, Caillaud also established a jump school at Calvi.



# ELITE UNITS COMBAT COMPANIES OF THE LEGION'S 2nd REP

**Does Light Infantry Still Have A Place?**



Currently, the 1st Company specializes in night and anti-tank action, and urban combat. The 2nd Company specializes in mountain operations. The 3rd Company specializes in amphibious operations. The 4th Company specializes in sniping and demolitions.

Far from the 11th Airborne HQ in southern France, the 2nd REP is located near Balagne, Corsica. This is an ideal training area with mountainous terrain, the sea, and ideal climate for airborne training.

### Anti-Tank, Night, MOU Specialists

While conducting AT and night training — its primary mission — the 1st Company also specializes in urban operations, because most modern operations take place in urban settings, as recently was the case in Bangkok and Brazzaville.

Commanded by Captain Trotignon, the company has use of the “combat village” of Frasseli, Corsica. Last April, the 1st Company had a chance to train at Hammelburg, the famous combat village of the Bundeswehr.

Weapons are adapted to these missions, and the company has 12 Remington pump shotguns intended, among other things, for the destruction of doors in the course of taking a building. They use buckshot, or a gas round that is especially effective in enclosed spaces.

Each rifle platoon has a standard FAMAS infantry rifle with a laser target designator. Beyond its psychological impact, with the red dot visible on the target, this system has been very effective in selecting targets, especially among those in a group.

The company also frequently works at night and in secrecy; hence they have 12 FAMAS rifles with silencers.

Modular ladders and grappling-hook launchers are under test. And of course, they are thoroughly trained in ropes and rappelling.

In addition to its three rifle platoons and the support platoon, the 1st Company has a K-9 pla-



Trained to take the battle to the enemy's rear areas, snipers of the 2nd REP's 4th Company appreciate the additional range and destructive capability of the .50 Browning round, as fired from the autoloading Barrett and bolt-action McMillan. They are also open to new options: Here 2nd REP sniper tests new .338 Super Magnum by Accuracy International, an interesting compromise between the .50 and the standard FR-F2 sniper rifle. (left) The 2nd Company is trained to exist, endure, move and fight in the mountains, and to do this they have become experts in harsh weather and difficult terrain — even in metropolitan canyons.



As the amphibious company of the 2nd REP, the 3rd is prepared to do wet insertions under, through, or even above the water to recon or seize beachheads. Here, a 3rd company trooper is picked up by a French Navy Super-Frelon chopper after a recon mission. (inset) Eight men of the 4th Company, snipers and explosive technicians, deploy in a Lohr utility vehicle — the tough, air-droppable French answer to a jeep.

toon of 17 dogs, for guard duty and tracking in urban combat. The “greens” (each company has a distinctive code color: yellow for HQ, green for the 1st Company, and so on) have been deployed on Operation *Iskoutir* at Djibouti, at Sarajevo, at Bangui and quite recently in Brazzaville, where two legionnaires were seriously wounded.

### Mountain Combat

The 2nd Company is tasked with maintaining a ready capability for intervention under extreme climatic conditions and in irregular terrain.

Winter and ops in snow define “extreme

climatic conditions,” while “irregular terrain” means mountains, including climbing and crossing obstacles — and difficult urban terrain.

For these two missions the company, commanded by Capt. Plessy, emphasizes two groups of skills: first, to exist and endure in the mountains. For this, they learn to live in igloos, to make snow shelters, to move vertically using ropes and horizontally on skis.

The other has to do with combat and the use of weapons in the mountains. The 2nd Company trains to take and hold key terrain — in this highly compartmented terrain, a



well-trained and properly equipped platoon can paralyze a much larger force.

Individual weapons are of the best, but for long-range fire, the old AA-52 light machine gun is still very effective. Plessy would also like to develop a heavy sniping capability using .50 caliber rifles. Notwithstanding their weight and bulk, these weapons could be extremely effective in the “war of crests.”

The 2nd Company has a training chalet at Vergio and climbing sites at Golo in Corsica, as well as a chalet at Montgenevre near Briançon, lent by the 27th Mountain Division, with whom there are frequent exchanges. NCO training comprises 22 weeks: 11 in summer and 11 in winter, at the mountain warfare school at Chamonix.

Enlisted training takes place in two sessions: a three-week summer course in Corsica leading to a certificate as a military mountaineer (*brevet d'alpinisme militaire* — BAM); and the certificate as a military skier (*brevet de skieur militaire* — BSM) after a course in winter. Even legionnaires from Cambodia and the Ivory Coast earn these certificates without major physical problems, through will-power and motivation.

To win his BAM, the legionnaire must march 15 clicks, including a climb and a descent of 1,000 meters each, in three hours and 30 minutes, with only 15 minutes allowed for the descent. The company average is two hours and 20 minutes, reflecting their high state of physical fitness. They also make static-line jumps into the snow.

The 2nd Company put its specialty to work during Operation *Salamandre*, in Bosnia, running numerous ski patrols on Mount Igman to check compliance with the Dayton accords. Further, the 2nd Company distinguished itself overseas during the hostage crisis at Loyada in Djibouti in 1976, and during Operation *Requin*, in Gabon in 1990.

### Amphibious Operations

Poseidon's trident is the emblem of the 3rd Company, which specializes in amphibious operations, especially the reconnaissance and seizure of beaches. Under command of Capt. Scheidegger, the amphibious company has five officers, 25 NCOs and 145 legionnaires.

Even more important than being experts in combat swimming and work in Zodiac boats, the men of the 3rd Company are elite infantrymen. Like the other rifle companies, the 3rd Company has three rifle and one support platoon. For amphibious operations, they reorganize into a recon platoon, a motorized platoon and two assault landing platoons. This unit is the lead company in an amphibious operation.

Amphibious training is conducted in phases and trains for two specialties: scout swimmers to reconnoiter beaches, and boat

pilots who earn a coastal pilot license in four weeks of training.

There are 15 training and 15 transport Zodiacs with 40hp motors, each carrying 10 men. The fifth week of training is a practical exercise circumnavigating Corsica, including raids and beach approaches, navigating by compass and GPS.

Scout swimmers also get four weeks training for the basic diving certificate. For them, final selection consists of an eight kilometer swim, with full equipment, in less than four hours.

Once trained, the men of the 3rd Company hold numerous amphibious exercises and, once or twice a year, maneuvers with the French navy, including water jumps, jumps with SCUBA gear from Super Frelon helicopters, launching of swimmers from submarines, and Zodiac raids from surface ships of the French Navy.

To maintain their readiness, the 3rd Company operates the amphibious operations center. NCOs are encouraged to take the courses at the French army's diving school, run by the 4th Engineer Regiment at Valbonne.

Several members of the company are qualified for offensive intervention (*intervention offensive* — IO) and can be deployed as a team.

The 3rd Company has distinguished itself in Chad, in Djibouti during Operation *Godonia*, in Somalia during Operation *Restore Hope*, in the former Yugoslavia and recently at Bangui in operation *Almandin 2*.

### Demolitions And Sniping

Combat in the enemy's rear, sniping and demolitions are specialties of the 4th Company, commanded by Capt. Talbourdel. Because of their weapons expertise, French army HQ frequently has them T&E new weapons. The Minimi, the British L-96A1, Barrett, McMillan and Hecate-2, were all field tested by the 4th Company. The 4th Company is currently examining the SM (Super-Magnum), a British weapon made by Accuracy International in 8.6mm or .338 Magnum caliber, a good compromise between heavy sniping rifles in 12.7mm (.50) and the standard FR-F2.

Marksmanship in all its forms, both day and night, is practiced intensely. Snipers were very effectively used at Kolwezi and since then, the 2nd REP has always emphasized this type of surgical action which, at much less cost than standard infantry assaults, has been psychologically very effective, especially in Africa.

For combat in Central Europe, the 4th Company is trained to put small groups behind the enemy to sow confusion by sniping, before exfiltrating back to their own lines.

The standard infantry of the French

army is changing, and the 4th Company, along with the other units of the 2nd REP, acts as a laboratory for tactical experiments.

A new type of platoon, consisting of three rifle squads, an anti-tank squad with the Eryx system, and a support squad with Hecate-2, is being tested.

Close attention to detail, precise execution and complete understanding of the materials involved are necessary qualifications for demolition experts working with



(top) The 1st Company specializes in urban combat, uses weapons particularly suitable for MOUT ops, such as MP-5SD submachine guns and Remington 12-ga. shotguns. (above) The 2nd REP's covert reconnaissance teams are equipped with leading-edge technology to supply HQ with real-time intelligence.

plastic (French version of C4), tolite and TNT, whether at the Engineer Training Center at Mont-Louis, or at the Arta-Plage Center at Djibouti.

### The "Eyes" And Fire Of The Regiment

These legion paratroopers are prepared to delay an enemy advance with all sorts of demolitions, mines and booby trap.

Their diverse activities have not prevented the "grays" of the 4th Company from distinguishing themselves at Kolwezi, in Rwanda,

at Sarajevo and most recently at Bangui.

*Compagnie d'Eclairage et d'Appui* — (CEA) The Reconnaissance and Support Company is the iron fist of the regiment. Its firepower, used either *en masse* or in small doses, makes the difference.

Thus, during the assault on Verbanja at Sarajevo and on other occasions, fire from their 120mm mortars let Bosnian Serbs know that they could only go so far with the units of UNPROFOR: The heavy weapons of the CEA of the 2nd REP are a very effective instrument in a political engagement.

Under command of Capt. Schiffer, the CEA has two anti-tank platoons with eight MILAN ATGM missile launchers, a heavy mortar platoon with six tubes, a reconnaissance platoon, an anti-aircraft platoon with six 20mm cannon, a command platoon and an airborne commando platoon (*groupe do commandos parachutistes* — GCP). For more than 20 years the men of the CEA have taken part in all the operations where French troops have been deployed.

The mission of the CEA includes supporting the regiment with the fire of its 120mm mortars, and the company is also the "eyes" of the regiment via its recon platoon and the GCP operating in the enemy's rear. Finally, the CEA provides anti-tank and anti-aircraft defense. The anti-aircraft platoon

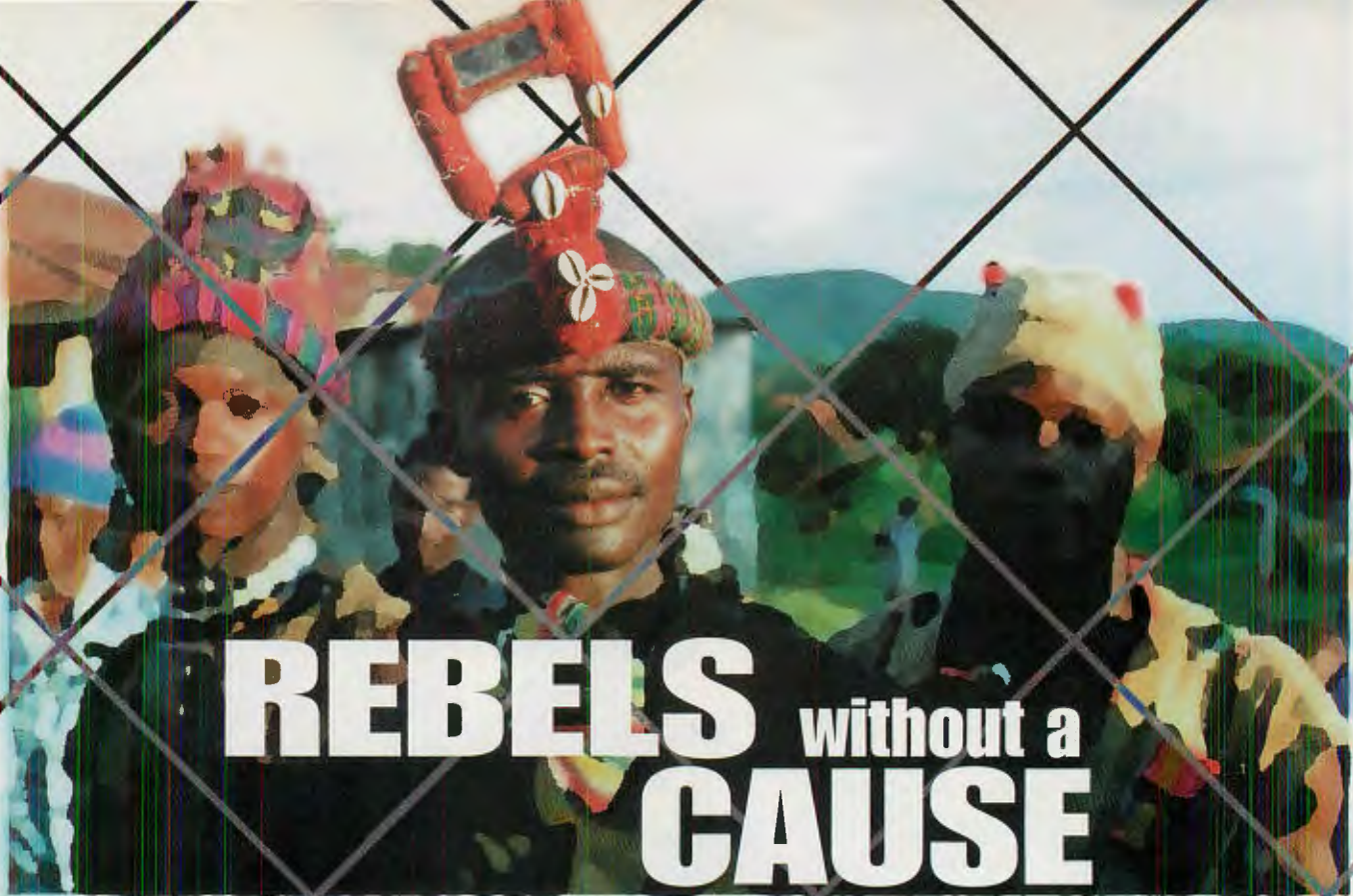
(SADAA) can also use its 20mm cannon in urban combat, in the anti-sniping role, and against light armored vehicles. This company will no doubt be one of the first to get new 81mm mortars to complement the 120mm mortars.

The GCP Platoon is one of the showcases of the regiment. Most of these elite soldiers are NCOs with extensive training for intense combat. Operational parachutists,

they are qualified for anti-terrorist operations, to "seize and hold" an airfield, or conduct recon missions behind enemy lines. They can be grouped with the other airborne commandos of the French 11th Airborne Division for special operations, as in the taking of Fort Al-Salman in Iraq by the Daguet Division. For such missions they have access to specialized equipment and weapons.

Among other things, the GCP Commandos have a camera which, coupled with a portable transmitter, sends pictures in near real time to the regimental CP. The photos are encrypted and sent by burst transmission. The regiment is one of very few in the French army to have this system for sending photographic images; an indication that the 2nd REP is very much a unit at the sharp end.

*Yves Debay is a combat correspondent for RAIDS magazine.* ✕



# REBELS without a CAUSE

Lt. Col. Luseni A-Hassan, former university major in environmental health science, now battalion commander of Konta's Komajors, about to start long patrol to Tongo Field. Various amulets, cowrie shell ornaments and mystical/magical

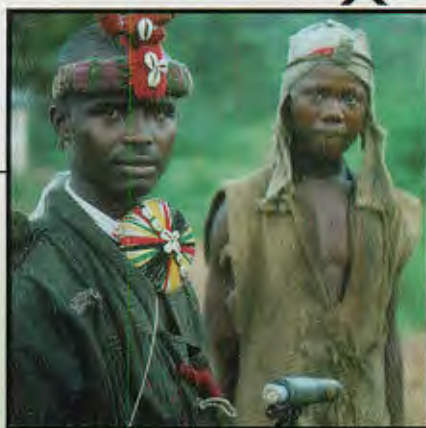
components protect these fighters from enemy fire ... most of the time. (inset) Although usually carrying a spear into battle, used as a baton to command his troops, here Hassan shows 12-ga. pistol made by sleeving a flare gun.

**J**ust outside of Medina, now a ghost-town, I find the first mangled corpse sprawled beside the road. Bones poke through the soldier's shredded Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) uniform.

I pass two more skeletons, their skulls peering into the jungle as if still searching for escape. These corpses betray the efficient handiwork of the *Komajors*, a secret society of Mende tribal warriors fighting to restore democracy to Sierra Leone. I walk by 25 more carcasses. Most of the dead appear hacked apart by machetes: Others were obviously shotgunned, and their shattered bones litter the path through no-man's land. I am 200 km northeast of Freetown, and the Komajor war is very hot.

Until this spring, Sierra Leonian army attacks on the Komajors would have been unthinkable. The Komajors fought alongside the army to rid Sierra Leone, an impoverished West African nation of 4.2 million souls, of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Largely replacing the mercenaries from Executive Outcomes — who lost their contract to wage war against the RUF guerrillas in 1996 — the Komajors pushed the RUF to the brink of extinction.

To paraphrase Mao, a guerrilla moves among the people like a fish through water. But the RUF did not swim like fish — they



## Sierra Leone's Mystical Militias Battle On

Text & Photos by Carl Prine

attacked like sharks. The RUF commander, Foday Sankoh, concocted a macabre strategy of rape, plunder, and wanton destruction hoping to coerce fearful villages into surrendering to his forces. Always desperate for recruits, Sankoh transformed orphaned boys, many as young as seven, into the shock troops of his "Small Boy Units."

The Mende tribe bore the brunt of RUF atrocities. The RUF kidnapped Mende girls and used them as sex slaves. They chopped off the hands of farmers to dissuade them from electing Tejan Kabbah as president of

Sierra Leone. Rather than submit to this RUF reign of terror, however, village chiefs began to urge their *Komasors*, traditional jungle hunters, to switch from shooting chimpanzees to guerrillas. The *Komasors* soon became the Komajors, and RUF rebels began to die in great numbers.

The Komajors' success on the battlefield increased their power and prestige throughout Sierra Leone, to the point that regular army officers began complaining of government favoritism toward these "primitive" Mende warriors.

But any favoritism was well-earned — the Komajors killed RUF insurgents. The army, poorly paid and badly trained, did not. The rebel war dragged on for six years. By 1996, more than 20,000 had died. More than a million refugees had fled the country. And Kabbah, elected in 1996, spurred the army and the Komajors to finish off the RUF.

### About Face: The Army Who Joined Its Foes

Allied with other tribal warriors — the Temne "Kopras" and the Nimba "Tamaboros" — the Komajors felt they were on the verge of winning the rebel war. The army disagreed. Weary of battle and disgruntled by the rising status of the Komajors, the army simply quit fighting. Beginning in the winter of 1996, local army

troops mutinied. Many units adopted the RUF practice of looting Mende villages. Sworn to defend their homeland against an attacker, Komajors soon found themselves fighting two enemies at once.

On 25 May 1997, an AFRC coup toppled Kabbah from power. Within two days, a shocked nation stared in disbelief as Major John Paul Karoma united his army with the RUF. Nigerian troops spearheaded an ECOMOG drive to recapture Freetown for Kabbah. The Peoples' Army — as the RUF now calls itself — met the Nigerian battalion just south of the city. Pinned down and running short of ammunition, the Nigerians surrendered. Undeterred, Nigerian gunners on the northern banks of the Sierra Leone River continue today to shell the port, blocking all ships from entering the capital. Nigerian mortarmen overshot their targets in September and killed more than 50 civilians. ECOMOG Alfa jets fire-bomb quayside targets almost daily. In October, six people died and 60 more were injured as jet-launched missiles slammed into the quayside neighborhood of Clinetown. Scuttlebutt in Freetown says that when the rainy season ends, a Nigerian tank column will drive from Lungi to conquer Freetown, home to about 50,000 AFRC troops.

The Komajors, however, receive no assistance from the Nigerians. In support of Kabbah, Komajors severed the Kono high-

way, the road to the diamond fields. They seized the diamond mines of Tongo Field. They took Zimi near the Liberian border, and many rutile and gold operations. It appeared likely that the Komajors would soon do to the AFRC what they did to the RUF. But then, like the Nigerians, the Komajors ran out of ammunition.

The AFRC recaptured Zimi in early October. After a three-day bombardment AFRC soldiers captured the Tongo Field mines, although surrounding villages remain firmly in Komajor control.

### Waging A War Of Attrition

Failing repeatedly to force open the Kono Highway, AFRC troops near Koidu tried a different approach. In late summer, AFRC battalions began attacking unarmed Mende villages. The army realized that the Komajors would abandon the highway to protect Mende civilians.

Now, I am walking to meet the Komajors of Pundaro. And after I get there, I will hike to Tongo Field, where fighting has been fierce. I really have no other choice, as the AFRC junta is trying to kill me.

Any combat correspondent will tell you that the greatest danger always involves walking over to the other side's lines. If they do not know you are coming, this becomes suicidal. And the army, which denies even operating in this area, knows that I know

too much. A western reporter on the loose with photographs and quotes of AFRC atrocities has a brief shelf-life. He may start spouting off about war crimes and ethnic cleansing. A big headache.

So it came as no surprise to me when Lieutenant Quoy, commander of the last AFRC checkpoint into Komajor territory, insisted that I return at 2100 that night, to a secluded spot 200 meters from his perimeter, alone. He was going to shoot me and say the Komajors did it. Imagine the headlines: "Komajors Execute American Journalist." The AFRC gets good press and they get rid of a nosy reporter.

Of course, how do I know the Komajors won't kill me either? I make my last security stop at a creek 800m from Komajor lines. As I pick my way through the wait-a-minutes and quietly ease myself chest-deep into the water, I listen carefully for AFRC soldiers.

I stash my pack and camera bag in a thicket of bamboo. I stare at the jungle path. Have they trailed me? After 10 minutes, nothing.

Then, I hear crashing in the brush behind me. I jerk my K-Bar out of the water, pointing it at the swamp behind me. Bush monkeys? I scan the top of the jungle canopy. Nothing. The creek bubbles around me. Think. This stream forks off the Sewa River, home to Sierra Leone's crocodiles. No people have hunted this neck of the woods for at



Pundaro Komajor group poses with painstakingly crafted amulets, and (right) catch-as-catch-can ordnance. Ornamented sticks in front of group are believed to turn rocket rounds around so they will then strike from whence they came. Does Aberdeen Proving Ground know about these?



(left) En route to Tongo Field, Hassan heard a noise, had his contingent set up a hasty ambush — to which no one came. To his credit, Hassan leads from the front, spear in hand. (above) On road to Tongo, Komajors displayed surprisingly sophisticated military tactics — if not muzzle discipline. (above, right) Abdul, left, confers with one of Hassan's lieutenants as they set out on patrol. Varying amulets evidently protect men from varying mission-specific hazards.

least three months. Come to think of it, those AFRC corpses were picked pretty clean. Many had been dragged far back into the mangrove swamps. I feel like I am at the bottom of the food chain. I decide to take my chances with the Komajors, not the crocodiles. Holding my camera bag over my head in my left hand, my K-Bar gripped tightly in my right — like that would gut a croc! — I wade down the stream and heave myself back onto the road.

### Eben Barlow, I Presume?

Soaked, I trudge up the hill. I see the shine of a zinc roof. This must be Pundaro. I blink: a boy is running straight at me 150m down the trail. He raises an RPG to his shoulder and points in directly at me.

He screams, "South African." Convinced that I am spearheading an Executive Outcomes invasion, 20 warriors tear out of the jungle. Some raise spears in the air, ready to throw. Others level shotguns. Boys with machetes swarm behind the RPG gunner. Riflemen point their AK-47s at the jungle behind me, for the rest of my mercenaries.

"Press" I yell. "Journalist!" I lift my press pass high in the air. "American!"

"Stop!" the boy with the RPG bellows. "Now advance." I take three steps. "Stop!" he shouts. "Now advance." We play this game for two minutes as I slowly creep toward the Komajor platoon.

I stop 25m away from them and slowly place my press pass and passport on the ground. I wait. The warriors carefully form a horseshoe around me. A man waving a machete reaches behind me and unsnaps my pack. Another picks up my press pass. I smile. I am polite. I keep babbling, "journalist ... American. I have come to meet the Komajors."

They are as stunned as I am. They do not know what to do with a journalist. They ask where I put my TV camera. Where is my crew from CNN? I laugh.

The Komajors wear burlap uniforms spangled with cowrie shells. Magic amulets hang from their necks. I am amazed by their Spartan discipline. Most AFRC soldiers seem to spend their days drunk. Of course, the sight of uniformed 10-year-old boys toking joints while pointing AK-47s at you is unnerving enough.

These Komajors, on the other hand, mean business. NCOs bark out orders.



In spite of wild costumes, spears, magic charms, no one should call Komajors "primitive." A.J.S. "Daddy" Bock, to right of man in striped shirt, is electrical engineer trained at Kenema's Technical Institute, commanding this platoon. Life is cheap and death is common in strife-torn Sierra Leone(right). This skeleton guarded the road to Pundaro.

Komajors systematically search my pack — twice. I am segregated from the platoon and frisked. They ask for more identification. Four-man patrols march out to recon all the jungle trails between here and AFRC lines.

In spite of the wild costumes, the spears, the magic charms, no one should call the Komajors "primitive." For example, A.J.S. "Daddy" Bock, 27, an electrical engineer trained at Kenema's Technical Institute, commands this platoon. His boss, Lieutenant Colonel Luseni A-Hassan, 24, studied environmental health science in Freetown before rising to Battalion Commander. Many Fula, Temne, and Susu students recently flooded the Komajor ranks, fighting to bring democracy back to Sierra Leone. Almost all the warriors here speak English, Mende, and one or two other tribal languages. And they all share the same fervid belief in the "magic, mystical power" of their secret brotherhood.

### Razed By The Army

Once they confirm that I came alone, they rush me back to Pundaro village, half a click south of their checkpoint. The village chief, his council of elders, and another squad of Komajors scramble out of their



Abdul, striking pose with spear as part of a hasty ambush, accompanied author all way from Pundaro — until he was killed in a night assault. Abdul wanted to go to school in the United States to be airline pilot.



huts to greet me. I gaze around. Pundaro has been shot to hell. Cassava sprigs grow where bedrooms once stood. Bullet holes pock charred houses. Near the road, I catch sight of .50 caliber machine gun shells. Zinc roofs lie crumpled, like paper wads, in the dust and rubble.

Everyone in Pundaro tells the same story: On 16 August, 200 AFRC soldiers and two trucks mounting anti-aircraft machine guns attacked Pundaro. The AFRC intentionally sprayed villagers with .50 caliber fire. They gunned down children, pregnant women, old people — those people unable to flee quickly into the jungle. They raped a pregnant woman. They plundered huts. They torched houses. They burned granaries. Then they "brushed" or plowed up the rice paddies. Because the Mende depend on rice as their staple crop, Pundaro's farmers must now dig jungle yams to survive.

On 19 September, the villagers say, the AFRC returned, this time without anti-aircraft guns. Eight Komajors met them just outside Pundaro. Although the AFRC captured one Komajor — and executed him — the Komajors chased the soldiers all the way back to Medina. The next day Hassan brought Komajor reinforcements to Pundaro.

The AFRC attacked on 23 September. They deployed three anti-aircraft vehicles on the outskirts of Pundaro. They were surprised by Hassan's 60 Komajors. Within an hour, the Komajors killed 25 AFRC soldiers and pursued them to Sewafe, capturing Medina. Wounded, Hassan decided not to reform his lines at Medina. I tell the villagers I want to meet Hassan. He is recovering in Konta, 30 Klicks south of Pundaro.

The next morning, two Komajors and I step off for Konta. On the way, I see the AFRC had carried their August campaign to other villages: burned out houses, demolished cars, torn up fields.

My companions travel light. Tail-end Charlie carries a pistol. The point man robin-hoods a long-barrelled shotgun across his back. And when Komajors hump, they run! We average better than 4mph over jagged hills, flooded paddies, rain-gorged creeks. Just past noon, while fording a stream, I count seven shots fired from an AK. The shooter sounds close, maybe 100m out in the jungle 10 o'clock from our position. The point man unshoulders his shotgun but doesn't slow down. He knows that AKs are rare in Komajor territory. Most Komajors consider them to be merely trophies — booty pulled from the clutches of dead AFRC soldiers — and 7.62 rounds are in short supply, anyway. The point man says nothing as we jog down the path. Later on, he confides that the AFRC probably executed somebody back there.

### Hanging Out With Hassan

We stop only once, to paddle a dug-out canoe over the Sewa River. Silver monsoon clouds heave and swirl above us as we drift downstream. Then the sky splits open. The canoe fills with rain and hailstones, and we beach it. Lightning bolts tear into the

hills above us as we climb the winding path to Konta. The point man picks up the pace. I am the only one shouldering a pack, and I can tell these warriors are testing me to see if I will drop. Running uphill, I pass the point man, yelling back that I was a Marine grunt and he was going to have to try damn harder than that to break me. They both laugh. I toss back my two canteens filled with rain-water. Only when they finish do I take my first sip of the day.

Shortly before sunset, my shoes gushing mud, we reach Hassan at Battalion Headquarters in Konta. He gives us water and a bowl of bush yams. I tell him I came to talk about the AFRC atrocities committed in Pundaro.

"This is why we started to fight the army," whispers

because his magical charms and prayers protect him. Around us, six more Komajors shuffle into the room. Hassan shows me which trinkets deflect bullets and which hats make jets crash from the sky. Hassan hands me a "Bomb Controller" stick which makes RPG missiles u-turn in midair, killing their launchers. He refuses to recite any special chants out loud, but he assures me that some prayers can fuze gun barrels and make "motor" [machine] guns explode. This is why they run headlong into withering machine-gun fire. Or sing during artillery bombardments. They believe in the bylaws of their mystical brotherhood, and they know they can survive anything the AFRC throws at them.

petrol, just enough to drive us south to Gendema, a Sewa River town. From the dug-outs carry all 10 of us across the river. Gendema looks like Pundaro. The residents tell us that the People's Army came up from Tongo Field last month and plundered the town. They blew up the ferry and now no vehicles can cross to the other side.

Hannah, 18, tells me that the RUF kidnapped her when she was 16 and held her for a year, passing her around as a sex-slave. She has heard about disease spread throughout the Sewa River Valley. She mentions Lassa Fever. And Ebola. She complains



In this brief Tongo Field firefight, Komajors rush to engage youthful People's Army troops with RUF troops bunched up behind. When attackers came within 200m, AK-47 riflemen open up, sending boys bolting for cover. Hassan raises his unwounded right arm, grasping a harpoon, signaling the Komajors charge. I race alongside, snapping film. A PG missile whizzes by, slamming into the elephant grass behind

Hassan. Dirt sprays into the air and I can feel pebbles and dirt inside my shirt spilling down my back. A second round drives my camera into my chest. The Komajors hum. Hassan's voice, a sing-song of prayers, pierces the air. The Komajors never flinched.



Hassan, blood soaking into the gauze bandage ringing his arm. "We got sick watching the army loot villages. They became as bad as the RUF. When we heard them coming, the Komajors went to meet them. So we fought with them. We killed a lot of them.

"We killed some trying to get back into the vehicles. I stood 50m away from one anti-aircraft vehicle. I was shot in my elbow. No Komajors died. It is not easy for a Komajor to die by gun fire! I am the commander. I yelled for everyone to advance. I must keep my arm up while we advance. Once it is up, am not allowed to let it drop. As soon as I dropped my hand I was wounded. I broke a w. That is why I was wounded."

It is not easy to die, Hassan continues,

During his initiation into the Komajors, a Mende recruit must stand still as a priest fires a rifle at his chest. If it strikes him, he will die. If the bullet misses, however, he has proven his faith in the magical fraternity. From now on, if he follows all the secret rituals, the Komajor knows he will survive. And win battles. To prove this to me, Hassan promises he will show me his Komajors in action.

**Dawn Patrol To Gendema**

At dawn, our patrol heads east into the rising sun. Hassan, feverish and swaddled in a black field jacket, his arm tightly bound, joins me in the middle of the pack. Two miles out, we climb into our bush taxi. Gasoline must be smuggled into this area, so I am forced to pay \$30 for two gallons of

of hunger and says that these villagers desperately need food and medicine.

I rent another bush taxi to take us close to Tongo Field. The driver came originally from Guinea and considers himself apolitical in this war. He just wants to sell food again to the Mende. He tells me that AFRC checkpoints, however, refuse to let food or medicine into Komajor-held territory. He used to be able to bribe AFRC soldiers to enter Mende lands, but now they will confiscate everything in his truck. The AFRC began this policy, he contends, after the Komajors won their battle at Pundaro. The AFRC, he says, knows that they cannot defeat the Komajors militarily, so they will starve their Mende supporters. The food blockade, he insists, is the AFRC's final solution to the Komajor problem.



# Scout Rifle



Jeff Cooper owns the "Scout Rifle" concept, lock, stock and barrel. In 1983, he defined the "general purpose rifle" as "... a conveniently portable, individually operated firearm, capable of striking a single decisive blow, on a live target up to 200 kilos in weight, at any distance at which the operator can shoot with the precision necessary to

place a shot in a vital area of the target." To Cooper a "scout" was one man moving from cover to cover, operating alone, and highly trained in all the fieldcraft arts.

The envelope was prescribed by Cooper with a maximum length of one meter (39.37 inches) and a total weight, empty, no greater than three kilograms (approximately 6.6

# Rifle

## A Gun For All Seasons

Text & Photos by  
**Peter G. Kokalis**



Prominent gun writer, Gary Paul Johnston, fires Steyr Scout Rifle equipped with optional 10-round magazine and protective shroud. In this configuration the Steyr Scout Rifle may have some law enforcement applications.

pounds). The rifle resulting from these parameters was to be convenient, powerful (whatever that means), accurate, rugged, versatile and aesthetically pleasing.

### Scout History

An early commercial precursor to the modern scout rifle was the Mannlicher Schoenauer Model 1903 Carbine chambered for the 6.5x54mm cartridge. There have also been numerous short, lightweight military bolt-action rifles chambered for full-size cartridges. The British No. 5 MkI "Jungle Carbine" is an example. There were an almost infinite number of carbines based upon the '98 Mauser action and even earlier Mauser designs. Examples include the Spanish and Argentine M91 Carbine, Belgian M89 Lightened Carbine, Spanish

M95 Carbine, Swedish M94/14 Carbine, Argentine Model 1909 Cavalry Carbine, FN Dutch Police Carbine, Iranian Models 98/29 and 49 Short Rifles, German Model 33/40 and so on. Most of them exhibited an unacceptable flash signature and increased recoil.

Furthermore, the turn-bolt, except in the hands of a dedicated and highly trained sniper, is an anachronism on today's battlefield. Today's military scout would be far better equipped to meet with, and destroy, the enemy in "shoot and scoot" scenarios armed with an M4, Steyr AUG or Kalashnikov than a short-barreled bolt-action. The scout rifle is a superb instrument for the game field, but not combat. I have personally hunted in Africa using a Scout Rifle with great success on impala at ranges out to 300 yards.

Until now all scout rifles have been custom-made from a variety of turn-bolt short actions, such as the Remington Model 600, Czech Brno ZKK and the superb Sako L-579 medium-length action. Most have been chambered for the .308 Winchester cartridge. Some "pseudo" scouts have been chambered for the .30-06 round using standard-length actions like the pre-64 Winchester Model 70. Other cartridges presumably compatible with the scout rifle concept include the 7mm-08, .350 Remington Magnum, .35 Whelen and 6.5mm Remington Magnum.

Over seven years in development and designed using specifications provided by none other than Jeff Cooper himself, Steyr-Mannlicher AG (Dept. SOF, Postfach 1000, Steyr, Austria) has just introduced a production series scout rifle with several dramatic innovations. Distributed by GSI, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 129, Trussville, AL 35173-0129; phone: 205-655-8299, fax: 205-655-7078), the new Steyr Scout Rifle falls clearly within the envelope configuration originally mandated by Cooper.

With two buttstock spacers, the overall length of the Steyr Scout Rifle is 39.57 inches. The weight, empty, with two five-round magazines and the scope with its mounts is 6.93 pounds. Initially chambered for the .308 Winchester (7.62x51mm NATO) cartridge, other rounds such as the 7mm-08 Remington and .243 Winchester are possible sometime in the future. Barrel length is only 19 inches with four grooves of rifling and a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches. Although thin-walled, the hammer-forged barrel has been fluted to cut weight and add rigidity.

The barrel's method of attachment to the receiver is unique. First, there is an integral cone machined into the chamber-end of the barrel. In front of this is an aluminum ring (longitudinally slotted for tightening) with an opposing interior cone on each end. Another counteracting ring with a cone goes in front of the aluminum ring. This is followed by a locking nut. Using a special wrench, the locking nut must be torqued to Steyr specifications by a trained armorer only. A rectangular steel locking wedge on an aluminum block attached to the underside of the receiver further secures the barrel. The barrel is completely free-floating and the barreled-action is held to, and bedded in the stock by means of two aluminum pillars in the stock.

A steel lock bushing (or barrel extension) at the chamber end of the barrel permits the use of an aluminum receiver, an important factor in keeping the complete package under 7 pounds. Made from a



Jeff Cooper fires the Steyr Scout Rifle, which was built to his specifications, from the classic standing position. Note optional 5-round sidesaddle-type spare cartridge carrier on the right side of the buttstock.

6061 T6 aluminum alloy extrusion, the receiver has been black hard-anodized. With the bolt locked in battery into the lock bushing at the end of the barrel, the receiver, in essence, serves only as a framework for the barrel and bolt in a manner reminiscent of the World War II German MG42

General Purpose Machine Gun.

### Scopes, Sights, and the SBS

To accommodate mounting of the long-eye-relief Leupold Scout Scope and the emergency "iron" sights, the receiver extrusion is unusually long: 15.67 inches

(398 mm). Installed in a recess at the rear end of the receiver is a spring-loaded flip-up, ghost-ring-type polymer rear sight which is adjustable for elevation zero only. The spring-loaded, front-sight post, with a vertical white bar, has been installed in a polymer receiver front cap and can be adjusted for windage zero. Just slide a serrated polymer bar forward slightly and the front sight post will pop up. The integral scope rail on top of the receiver has twelve mounting points and is configured to MIL-STD-1913. In other words, it is a so-called "Picatinny Rail."

The new Steyr Scout Rifle uses the SBS (Safe Bolt System) action introduced in 1996. With four front locking lugs (the Steyr SSG featured rear locking lugs), an important feature of the SBS is a safety ring that is an integral part of the lock bushing. This safety ring rotates with the bolt and shields the extractor, so that escaping gases can only go down the barrel, instead of pushing outward against the extractor. There are also two standard gas ports on the bolt body to accommodate the safe escape of gas from a pierced primer. A cut-out on the bolt body at the ejection port (when the bolt is closed) and six grooves around the body were designed to reduce weight.

**D**uring World War II Germany fielded some K98k rifles with the long-eye-relief ZF41 1.5X scope, which mounted on a side rail machined into the rear sight base of specially prepared rifles. It was not popular with the troops and many were simply discarded on the battlefield.

Nonetheless, an important and unusual attribute of the

## Leupold Scout Scopes

Scout Rifle is a forward-mounted scope with an eye relief of about 10 inches. Cooper has argued the case for a low-power, long-eye-relief scope with great conviction. He was convinced that it permitted the shooter to see both the entire area in front of him, as well as the cross hairs printed on the target — as long as the scope's magnification remained under three power to prevent a great disparity between the view perceived by each of the two eyes. And, although the technique is rarely used in the field, a long-eye-relief scope is particularly suited for rapid snap shooting.

He also argued that it permitted low mounting. This is important since a peep-aperture "ghost ring" rear emergency sight is another key ingredient in the scout rifle package. Keeping the scope's line of sight as close as possible to that of the iron sights is important because it permits the buttstock's comb to provide a proper cheek-weld with either sight.

Until recently, the only low-magnification, long-eye-relief scope available for this purpose was the 2.75X fixed power

Burriss Scout Scope. The concept was correct, but the execution was seriously flawed. In my circle — where the scout rifle prevails — the Burriss scope was noted principally for its poor quality and tendency to fail at the most inappropriate time. Leupold & Stevens, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 688, Beaverton, OR 97075; phone: 503-646-9171, fax: 503-526-1475) has introduced a 2.5x28mm (actual magnification: 2.3X) Scout Scope that quite frankly blows Burriss out of the water.

Leupold's fixed-power scopes have been the purest form of their incomparable craftsmanship since they began manufacturing scopes just after World War II. Leupold's Scout Scope provides 9.3 inches of eye relief. The Steyr Scout Rifle scope is equipped with a heavy duplex reticle pattern as per Jeff Cooper's specifications.

Using a 1-inch tube, the overall length of the Leupold Scout scope is 10.1 inches. The weight is only 7.5 ounces. Both the ocular and objective diameters are 1.36 inches. At 100 yards, the elevation and windage adjustment range is 110 inches. One click of adjustment equals 1 minute of angle. Both the windage and elevation knob caps are marked "Steyr Scout Rifle." The field of view at 100 yards is 22 feet.

Excellent image quality is a characteristic of all Leupold scopes. This is possible only because Leupold uses material and techniques that minimize chromatic aberration, distortion and curvature of the field to an extent not achieved by any other scope manufacturer in the United States. More top benchrest shooters, professional hunting guides, custom rifle makers and elite military and law enforcement special operation units use Leupold scopes than any other make.

— P.G.K.



Leupold's 2.5x28mm Scout Scope provides 9.3 inches of eye relief and unparalleled optical quality.



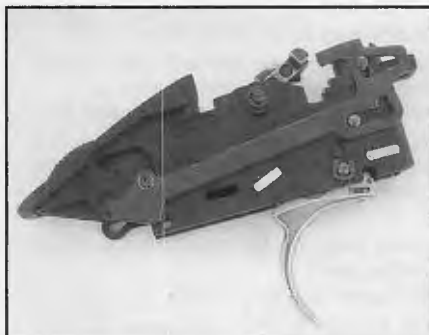
Designed by Jeff Cooper, the Steyr Scout Rifle is the first production series version of his "general purpose rifle." (right) The Steyr Scout Rifle is equipped with an integral bipod that is considerably more robust than the types found on some custom-made scouts.



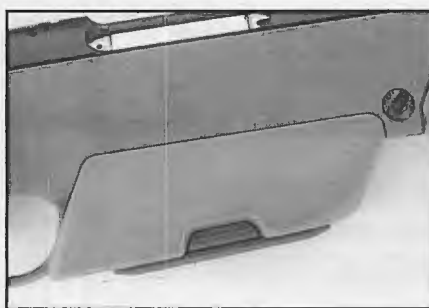
However, a groove around the ejection port area of the body is present for anti-debris and anti-icing purposes. The bolt body has been nickel-plated because this finish is tough and corrosion-resistant and it also reduces the coefficient of friction. The two rear locking lugs are smaller than the front lugs. To enhance the bolt lift motion, there are dual opposed cocking cams within the bolt body. The classic Mannlicher-Schoenauer butterknife bolt handle's lift is 70 degrees. An additional 20 degrees is utilized for the downward locking motion described below. An indicator pin protrudes from the rear of the bolt shroud when the firing pin is cocked.

The SBS bolt assembly is much easier to disassemble than that of the Steyr SSG. Just depress the disassembly button on the left side of the shroud and then rotate the shroud approximately 1/4-inch clockwise. The shroud, firing pin assembly and cocking cam ring can then be withdrawn from the rear of the bolt body. Reassemble in the reverse order.

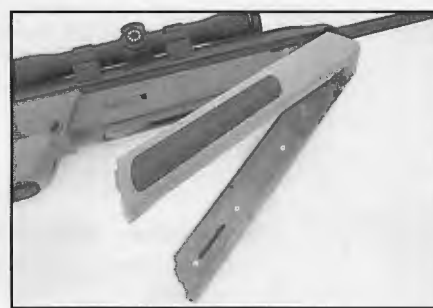
The ambidextrous roller-type tang safety on the trigger mechanism has three positions: Fire, Loading and Safe. When the roller is rotated all the way forward a red dot becomes visible and the rifle is ready to fire. The adjustable (by trained armorers only) trigger has been set at the factory to provide a trigger pull weight of 3.5 to 4.0 pounds. All SBS rifles use the same triggers. As a consequence, the nickel-plated trigger on the Steyr Scout Rifle is smooth on the front edge and serrated at the rear so it can be more easily pressed forward when it is installed in a single-set mechanism



(left) Steyr Scout Rifle trigger assembly. Note the ambidextrous roller-type tang safety. (right) Steyr Scout Rifle bolt group is much easier to disassemble than that of the Steyr SSG sniper rifle.



(left) Both 10-round magazines and an adaptor kit with a shroud to protect them are available options. (right) To deploy the integral bipod, simply depress the polymer locking lever and then pivot the legs to their locked and completely extended position.



available only in Europe. The trigger mechanism itself is, in principle, similar to that of the Steyr SSG. However, the method by which the bolt is removed from the receiver required changes to the mechanism.

When the roller-type tang safety is rotated rearward to the middle position, a white

dot is exposed and the trigger is blocked. However, the bolt can be manipulated and thus the rifle loaded or unloaded with the trigger and sear blocked. In conjunction with this, it should also be noted that if the magazine is lowered approximately a 1/4-inch to a drop-lock position, the bolt can be

cycled and a single round inserted and chambered by hand.

When the safety is rotated all the way rearward, a white dot becomes visible and spring-loaded gray safety catch pops upward. In this position, the trigger remains blocked and the bolt cannot be rotated. Furthermore, the bolt handle can now be rotated downward another 20 degrees to remain locked in that position and block the firing pin. The gray safety catch must be depressed downward to rotate the tang safety forward.

To remove the bolt from the receiver, unlock it while it is in the loading position with the trigger blocked. Then rotate the

safety all the way rearward and the bolt can be withdrawn. During re-installation, the trigger and firing pin remain blocked until the roller-type tang safety is rotated forward.

### Function Dictates Form

The gray synthetic Zytel (an ABS glass reinforced polymer) stock, with a non-skid texture, has an integral lightweight folding bipod and a rail on the underside of the forearm to attach accessories. The rifle comes equipped with two spacers which provide a length-of-pull of 13.58 inches. Removal, or installation of additional spacers, offers a length-of-pull ranging from 12.68 to 16

inches. Extra 0.45-inch spacers are available as an optional accessory. The heel of the buttstock is rounded to prevent snagging. The stock has been molded with filler material in back of the trigger guard to prevent slamming against the finger during recoil.

The underside of the stock's butt end is noticeably undercut and in this area is a compartment for storage of the spare magazine. In front of this is a storage area for a cleaning kit. Both 10-round magazines and an adaptor kit with a shroud to protect them are available options. The double-detent, detachable, staggered-column, box-type magazines, whether of 5- or 10-round capacity, are injection-molded from a tough, black synthetic called "Grivory." The magazine catch-release system is similar to that found on the Steyr SSG. There are black removable panels on each side of the butt end of the stock and on the bipod legs. They can be replaced with inserts of other material for cosmetic reasons, or the one on the right side of the buttstock can be substituted for a sidesaddle-type spare cartridge carrier.

To deploy the integral bipod, depress the polymer lever to the rear of the accessory rail on the underside of the stock's forearm area and then pivot the legs to their locked and completely extended position. The command height (the distance from the ground to the center line of the

## Steyr Scout Rifle

### SPECIFICATIONS

**Caliber:** 7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Winchester).

**Operation:** Bolt-action. Four front locking lugs. Unique safety ring in the barrel's lock bushing shields extractor from excessive pressures. 70-degree bolt lift with an additional 20 degrees for locking of the firing pin. Roller-type tang safety with three positions: Fire, Loading and Safe.

**Weight:** empty, with two five-round magazines and the scope with its mounts: 6.93 pounds.

**Barrel:** four groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches. Hammer-forged and fluted to cut weight and add rigidity.

**Barrel length:** 19 inches.

**Feed mechanism:** Detachable, double-detent, staggered-column, 5- or 10-round box-type magazines, injection-molded from a tough, black synthetic called "Grivory."

**Optical sights:** Leupold 2.5x28mm Scout Scope with heavy duplex reticle pattern.

**Emergency sights:** Spring-loaded flip-up, ghost-ring-type polymer rear sight adjustable for elevation zero only. Spring-loaded, front-sight post, with a vertical white bar, installed in the polymer receiver front cap, can be adjusted for windage zero.

**Furniture:** Gray synthetic Zytel (an ABS glass reinforced polymer) stock, with a non-skid texture and an integral lightweight folding bipod. Rail on the underside of the forearm to attach accessories. Equipped with two spacers which provide a length-of-pull of 13.58 inches.

**Suggested retail price:** \$2,595, complete with Leupold Scout Scope, two five-round magazines, leather three-point scout sling and a carrying case.

**Manufacturer:** Steyr-Mannlicher AG, Dept. SDF, Postfach 1000, Steyr, Austria.

**Importer:** GSI, Inc., Dept. SDF, P.O. Box 129, Trussville, AL 35173-0129; phone: 205-655-8299, fax: 205-655-7078.

**Scope manufacturer:** Leupold & Stevens, Inc., Dept. SDF, P.O. Box 688, Beaverton, OR 97075; phone: 503-646-9171, fax: 503-526-1475.

**T&E summary:** First production series example of Jeff Cooper's scout rifle concept. Superb medium-game rifle. Excellent accuracy. Long-eye-relief scope provides both fast target acquisition and visual command of the tactical frontal area. Lightweight and compact. Highly recommended.



The underside of the stock's butt end is noticeably undercut and in this area is a compartment for storage of the spare magazine. In front of this is a storage area for a cleaning kit.

barrel's axis) is approximately 11 inches. With the bipod deployed, the rifle can be rotated 15 degrees in either direction. Bipods on hunting rifles are useful to a) check zero in the field, b) shoot game from an ambush position, and c) a convenient rest for the rifle during break periods.

A so-called "CW" or three-point sling is another important ingredient in Jeff Cooper's Scout Rifle concept and three-point, flush-mounted sling sockets on the stock are provided for this purpose. The CW sling is named after Cooper's Guatemalan friend, Carlos Widmann. Widmann showed Cooper an old military rifle with a sling loop attached to the front of the trigger guard. This permits a sling to be secured forward of the base of support without resorting to the more complex U.S. military-type target sling. The rifle



Steyr Scout rifle completely disassembled and shown with three buttstock spacers and the armorer's wrench used to remove the barrel from the receiver.

was most probably a Lee Metford or SMLE as the British have employed this sling position since 1895. Eventually the concept was improved by Cooper and his associates by adding an additional sling segment between the looped firing position and the rear sling swivel. In this latter configuration, a leather sling manufactured by Turner Saddlery (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 120, Clay, AL 35048-0120; phone: 205-680-9377, fax: 205-680-4250) is supplied with the Steyr Scout Rifle.

Jeff Cooper has quite justifiably criticized "the benchrest mentality" with its obsession for accuracy, stating emphatically that it has set practical field shooting backwards. He has gone so far to state that group size can be a fallacious measurement. And yet, the Steyr engineers have provided us with a Scout Rifle that clearly has the potential for sub-MOA accuracy with match-grade ammunition. My personal results with the Steyr Scout Rifle in a benchrest environment produced 3/4-MOA groups.

Many believe that barrel lengths under 20 inches will significantly reduce the muzzle velocity. Although the propellant used is an important factor in this equation, short barrels do not necessarily mean lower velocities. Chronograph results obtained during a recent Steyr Scout Rifle writers' seminar held at the NRA Whittington Center in Raton, New Mexico were as follows: Federal 168-grain BTHP 308M, 2,600 fps; Hornady 165-grain Lite Mag, 2,785 fps; Hornady 150-grain Lite Mag, 2,834 fps; and American Eagle 150-grain FMJ, 2,855. While fired at an elevation of approximately 6,500 feet asl, nevertheless, these muzzle velocities are very close, and



While longer than the caliber 5.56x45mm Steyr AUG bullpup, the Steyr Scout Rifle is chambered for the considerably more effective 7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Winchester) cartridge.

in some instances slightly higher than results expected of longer barrels, albeit in denser air at lower elevations.

Others are even more convinced that thin-walled barrels will invariably overheat during long firing sequences with a consequent change of impact downrange, or at least noticeable "vertical stringing" of shot groups. Our tests at Whittington Center indicate that this is not the case.

Jeff Cooper has stated that an essential element of the scout rifle is *handiness*. And, Steyr's new Scout Rifle is certainly that and much more. Cooper believes that the scout rifle is not just a short range rifle, but can also be deployed in three different hunting

scenarios: very quick target acquisition, i.e. snap shooting; reasonably quick target acquisition in the normal game hunting environment; and slow, or firing from ambush as at water holes or tree stands. Made to his standards, the Steyr Scout Rifle meets all of Jeff Cooper's specifications. I personally have only one criticism of the pre-production series samples I have fired. The action is a bit too stiff for my tastes.

The Steyr Scout Rifles carries a suggested retail price of \$2,595, complete with Leupold Scout Scope, two five-round magazines, leather three-point scout sling and a carrying case. Production series specimens should be available by March, 1998. ✕

The Whittington Center belongs to all of us. That is, all of the almost three million of us who are members of the National Rifle Association. Founded in 1973, the Whittington Center is, without doubt the largest and most complete shooting and hunting complex in the world. Located on 33,300 acres (52 square

## NRA Whittington Center

miles) at the eastern slope of the Sangre de Cristo mountains (the southernmost extension of the Rocky Mountains), elevations at Whittington Center range from 6,300 to 8,100 feet asl. Just 10 miles southwest of Raton, New Mexico, there is an airport only 1 mile from the entrance.

The upper portion of the property is covered with lush stands of pine, fir and spruce. Wildlife is carefully managed to provide excellent hunting for elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion and wild turkey. New Mexico hunting licenses are available locally and can be purchased upon arrival. Consistently high success rates are attained for all species.

Whittington Center plays host for many of the world's top competitive

shooting events. The variety of ranges is astounding and includes benchrest, highpower rifle, smallbore and highpower rifle and long range pistol metallic silhouette, PPC, practical pistol, black powder, hunter sight-in, smallbore rifle, trap, skeet and sporting clays. All of the ranges have been designed for concurrent use. Jeff Cooper conducts both his rifle and pistol courses at Whittington Center.

The housing facility consists of three buildings which will accommodate 90 people. In addition, there are eleven log cabins and one housekeeping cabin. More than 70,000 people a year visit Whittington Center. The Whittington Adventure Camp, designed for young men and women between the ages of 13 to 17, consists of two two-week sessions in June and July. At the

Whittington Adventure Camp, young people are taught firearms safety and the recreational use of, and basic marksmanship fundamentals in, rifle, shotgun, pistol and black powder firearms. In my opinion, this is the Whittington Center's most important activity, as the future of shooting sports rests solely upon our youth.

For further information contact the NRA Whittington Center directly at P.O. Box 700, Raton, New Mexico 87740-0700 (phone: 505-445-3615). Once thought by some to be a boondoggle, the Whittington Center has become one of the NRA's most important projects.

— P.G.K.



The 33,000-acre NRA Whittington Center is located on the eastern slope of the Sangre de Cristo mountains just 10 miles southwest of Raton, New Mexico.

**D**uring the '70s and '80s, South Africa was involved in a medium-intensity insurgency war in the north of Namibia (then called South West Africa) and southern Angola. The war officially started in 1966 when a small group of trained South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) guerrillas infiltrated Ovamboland from neighboring Angola and Zambia, with the purpose of overthrowing the government. They were quickly rounded up by South African Security Forces after they established a base camp in the Ougulumbashe area.

After that, the conflict remained at a low key until 1975, when Angola became independent from Portugal. Although involved in a civil war of its own, the governing party of Angola, MTLA, gave their support to SWAPO in their struggle for inde-

pendence from South Africa. The war immediately started to escalate with thousands of volunteers leaving the country for military training in Zambia, Tanzania, Angola, East Germany and the Soviet Union. These countries also supported the guerrillas with weapons and equipment and by 1978 the war had intensified to an extent that the South Africans found themselves involved in a full-scale guerrilla war along the entire length of the northern border, including East and West Caprivi.

### **New Methods For New Technology**

Although the traditional methods of detection proved to be effective enough at the time, it was recognized that mines with a minimal metal content could be missed by metal detectors and it was impractical to try and probe the entire length and width of

# Clearing The Cold-War's COWARDLY KILLERS

by Frank Van Der Waal PHOTOS COURTESY MECHEM

pendence from South Africa. The war immediately started to escalate with thousands of volunteers leaving the country for military training in Zambia, Tanzania, Angola, East Germany and the Soviet Union. These countries also supported the guerrillas with weapons and equipment and by 1978 the war had intensified to an extent that the South Africans found themselves involved in a full-scale guerrilla war along the entire length of the northern border, including East and West Caprivi.

It was in April 1971, that South African troops first came face to face with Russian tank mines, when a TM-46 exploded under the rear wheel of an S.A. Police Ford F-250 near Singalamwe in Eastern Caprivi. During the next year several other incidents took place and because their soft-skinned vehicles offered no protection, heavy casualties were suffered by the S.A. Police. It became the task of a gifted scientist, Dr. Vernon P. Joynt, to design a protection system against these tank mines.

Several prototype vehicles were designed over the next 20 years, culminating in very successful mine protection as found in vehicles like Casspir, Buffel and Mamba, all designed by Dr. Joynt and his teams. They saved hundreds of lives during the next decade. Years later, Dr. Joynt became the first General Manager of Mechem Consultants.

At the same time, a capability had to be developed to detect and destroy these mines that had become a serious threat to the military as well the civilian population. Civilians were using the same roads as the military (99% of the time these roads were gravel and sand tracks) and soon the number of civilian mine casualties were far higher than that of the military. Military vehicles were not allowed to travel on roads before they

**South  
African  
Company  
Makes  
Subcontinent  
Safe For  
Democracy**

Czech PT-MI-BA3 AT mine, which has a bakelite body with little metal to be detected, planted with PMA2 antipersonnel mines to make detonation more probable and removal more difficult. This indiscriminate combination can be set off by even a man on a bicycle.



(above, left) Soviet 1,000 pound bomb had a cortex det cord in the nose cone, connected to an AP pressure switch. (above) Operator with Soviet TM-57 AT mine with metal casing — det cord from fuze well to pressure switch is usually removed and the mine blown off-road. New types are taken for analysis and dog training.



Operator uses trowel and geologist's hammer to uncover a Chinese Type 72 AP mine, sitting atop an AT mine.



(right) Chinese Type 72 AT mine atop a Soviet TM-46 AT mine, typical of double-mining. With more than 80 types of mines found so far, the possible combinations for double-mining are seemingly limitless.



all the roads with prodders. The use of sniffer dogs was suggested as it was well known that police forces around the world were already using the smelling ability of dogs to detect drugs, stolen property, bodies, etc. It was known that most mines are filled with explosives that have a nitrate base and handlers started to teach dogs to recognize the distinctive smell of TNT, RDX, Trotyl etc. The training phase proved promising and it was only when actual detection searches started under operational conditions, that dog handlers and scientists started to realize how many new problems they were facing.

Dogs that were trained in the mild climate of Pretoria suffered in the heat of the operational area, where temperatures were usually in the high thirties.

After about half an hour of diligent searching, dogs would start heading for shady spots under the trees and lose interest in the work because of the heat and fatigue. Several dogs died from heat exhaustion and dehydration in spite of precautions taken. In spite of the fact that provision was made for acclimatization and to get used to the particular "background smells" of the area, opera-

tional results were unsatisfactory. This was mainly due to the fact that the dogs could only be utilized in the early hours of the day when it was cooler, resulting in poor productivity. To expand the number of dogs in order to increase their work capability was only a limited solution, because of the logistical and transport problems that it created.

Thus it happened that free-running sniffer dogs were never used to their full potential during the years of conflict. Dr. Joynt maintains to this day that free-running dogs used in isolation (without making use of combinations of other techniques) can only guarantee an efficient clearance rate of about 60%.

### The New Rescue Dogs

During these years scientific tests were conducted by Dr. Joynt and his team of scientists and operators and it was established that the smell of the explosives inside a buried mine contaminated the soil above and around it, no matter what material was used to encase the explosive. Experiments with vapor pressures were conducted and it soon became obvious that if they could find a way to collect the vapors near the road

surface, they could let the dogs analyze substantial distances without having to walk more than a few dozen meters in conditions that were ideal, compared to the harsh conditions on the road itself.

A fabric was chosen and treated chemically to improve its ability to collect and retain the smell of explosives and a hollow tube-like sample collector was manufactured. A suction device was developed and after many experiments it was calculated that sucking air at a rate of about 80 liters per minute was sufficient to cover 4 to 5 meters of road width when moving in a mine-protected vehicle at a speed of about 10km per hour. It was discovered that the system is very sensitive and that the smell of propellants used in firearm cartridges could be picked up and identified by the dogs, as well.

It was also found that, due to its sensitivity, the system could easily be contaminated and that "false positives" could occur if care is not taken to decontaminate hands and equipment with soap and water or a special chemical. It was also established that the system worked very reliably in hot conditions as the smell of explosives seemed to be released more freely than when it was subjected to low temperatures. In fact, it was discovered that a prevailing wind could blow the smell of propellants as far as 40 meters and still be collected and identified by the system.

Today the MEDDS system is a proven and tested technique to verify large distances of road and several contracts have been successfully undertaken in Africa. Even in the countries where fighting had been fierce (e.g. Angola), it is a known fact that mines occur with substantial distances between them, resulting in a lot of wasted time if the traditional detection methods are used searching clean areas. One of the biggest advantages of the MEDDS system is that it eliminates the negative areas and thus the time that would have been wasted searching for mines in such areas.

### Efficiency Counts: Time's A Wasting

In comparison, using metal detectors a full team of engineers could be limited to less than a kilometer of road clearance per day. The MEDDS system used on the same road, could sample more than 40 km per day. The samples can be analyzed on the same day and the clearance can be concluded the following day, depending on the size of the team and the extent of contamination.

In this way, Mechem, while subcontracting to Royal Ordnance, cleared 2,000 km of roads in Mozambique for the U.N. in 1994 — in just four and a half months. The contract that they are currently working in Angola requires that they clear a total distance of 7,000 km in six months. Several other smaller road clearance contracts have

## Special Forces To Tackle A Special Problem

The U.N. Mine Clearance and Policy Unit estimates that there are more than 110 million active mines littering some 68 countries — with a like number stockpiled waiting to be planted. Every month more than 2,000 people are killed or maimed by mine explosions, and most of the casualties are civilians who fall victim long after hostilities have ceased. For every mine cleared, 20 are laid: in 1994, approximately 100,000 were cleared, while an additional 2 million were planted. It is estimated that it would cost \$33 billion to remove *existing* mines. Many experts believe that — if no further mines are planted — it would take 1,100 years to clear the entire world of mines under current conditions.

Land mine usage has dramatically increased over the past two decades, with an emphasis on its potential as a weapon to deny civilians access or the use of farmlands, irrigation channels, roads, waterways and public utilities. In other words, their utility in military denial operations aside, as a practical matter land mines primarily kill and injure peaceful civilians and their children.

A typical case in point is Angola, where there are an estimated 10-15 million mines deployed. There are at least 500 different mine designs, and more than 80 types have been located in Angola, with new types still being found. The general rule holds true in Angola, where guerrilla forces lay anti-tank mines, and government forces lay anti-personnel mines because guerrillas usually move on foot.

Deminers require years of experience, and Mechem relies heavily on former special forces and former police SWAT personnel, with local support from highly experienced support personnel.

Mechem spent more than five years in Mozambique: In 1991, five people cleared more than 12,000 AP mines in three months in a project to clear the power lines between South Africa and the capitol city of Maputo. There were 200-300 mines cleared from around every pylon, and the men were ambushed seven times while conducting these ops. They then set about clearing roads, and in one segment of the contract cleared 2,000km in four and a half months, subcontracting to Royal Ordnance. Other contracts in Mozambique included clearing the Cahora Bassa power line.

From January 1996 Mechem has been in Angola, with a crew consisting of 30 South Africans, 13 Gurkhas, 16 Zimbabweans, six Mozambiqueans, two Americans and one Canadian, plus 10 Angolan *sapadores* (sappers). Quality assurance is by the German firm Gerbera, with eight former East Germans.

—Peter G. Kokalis



been successfully undertaken for NGOs, and road contractors.

The Mechem technique, although it revolves around MEDDS, is based on the "Toolbox" principle. This means that to attain the required clearance rate of 99.6% as laid down by the U.N., a combination of detection methods is used, predicated on terrain, weather, types of mines and so on. This also means that the company is striving to have as many technical options as possible in the field, because it maintains that no *single* detection method could guarantee a 99.6% clearance rate. New equipment is constantly being developed and old equipment improved, in order to keep ahead of problems and conditions in the field.

Today, a typical day of road clearance in Angola would look like this: At 0600 the vapor-sampling teams move out in mine-resistant Casspir APCs and are dropped off at intervals of 10 km. Each team has two manual-pump generators that are carried like backpacks. They set off on foot, walk-



Russian T-54 tank destroyed by mine during an offensive is inspected by Ronco dog looking for AP mines and booby traps.



Soviet TM-57 AT mine boosted with 200-gram block of TNT. Multinational crew has Austrian AN19/2 Schiebel metal detector.

ing in the Casspir's tracks, covering each side of the road, sucking air through the sample tubes from close to the surface of the road. At about 300 meters they stop to change the samples. This is the most important phase of sampling as contamination can easily spoil the samples. The samples are pre-marked and their numbers are logged on a special route sheet, corresponding with the GPS reading of that spot. The road is also marked with lime or paint to mark the exact change-over point in case the clearance team has to go back to that position (civilian GPS systems are not always absolutely accurate).

All the time, care must be taken not to touch the sample tubes with the bare hands and they are carefully stored in tight plastic containers resembling film canisters. The

operators' hands and sample holders are decontaminated with a chemical before new sample tubes are inserted and the sampling can continue.

Every 300 meters samples are changed in this way until the team reaches the starting point of the team ahead of them. In this way both sides of the road can be sampled covering more than 40 km per day. The air samples are transported back to the base camp in plastic boxes and flown by helicopter to the nearest dog analysis center for testing. The results of the analysis are communicated back to the team by radio. As all samples are collected in duplicate, half the samples are flown to the Mechem Dog School in Pretoria for control checking by the dogs there, to compare results with those of the operational dogs.

### Protecting Valuable Assets

The operational analysis center is usually located in an area that is considered ideal for dogs' health (i.e., as high as possible above sea level where it is cooler and free from tropical diseases). The dogs work in a shady area and are accustomed to all the smells of the area (referred to as "background smells"), therefore reacting more confidently to foreign smells.

When the mobile base in the field receives the results (usually the following day), the clearance teams (different from the vapor sampling teams) move out in Casspir vehicles to the road sampled the previous day and locate the stretches of road as indicated to positively contain explosives or explosive devices. "Negative" areas (i.e., areas that have not been indicated by the dogs during analysis) can safely be ignored and regarded as clear, as the system is so sensitive that it indicates the smell of spent cartridge cases that have been lying on the roads for years.

Free-running dogs (different from the MEDDS dogs) are sent down the road on both sides to search the whole surface. This is important to locate minimal-metal-content mines that could be missed by metal detectors. After the dogs, the metal detectors are used in the traditional way and if nothing is found, the surface of the road is ripped with hydraulic rippers attached to the backs of the Casspirs, to a depth of approximately 150mm. The procedure is repeated or adapted to achieve the required clearance rate until all the stretches of road are clear, usually totaling between 15 and 30 km per day. Taking into consideration that, on the same day, the sampling team goes out again to carry on with vapor sampling where they left off the previous day, it is easy to understand that, once there is continuity, the teams can clear more than 150 km per week.

There are, of course, factors that may

*Continued on page 66*

# Going Once, Going Twice ...

## Controversy Surrounds Auction For LAPD Memorial Fund

by Wayne Laugesen



Los Angeles police will benefit again from the guns they borrowed from B&B Sales during a deadly North Hollywood shootout with bank robbers last February.

Six of the seven guns were sold by auction in October at the 18th annual Soldier Of Fortune Expo Trade Show in Las Vegas. The guns — three Bushmasters, one pre-ban Eagle and two Remington 11-87s — brought in \$10,200.

Of that, \$7,200 was donated to the Los Angeles Police Department Memorial Fund for deceased officers. The remainder will cover the wholesale cost of the guns, said Bob Kahn, chief executive officer of B&B Sales, the Los Angeles gun store that loaned the guns to police and sold them at cost.

"When they needed these weapons, we were there," Kahn said of the shootout, in which two suspects were killed. "We helped them when they needed help, no questions asked. All the rank and file people of the police department know we helped them, and they are thankful."

One officer in the shootout, Kahn said, bought the gun he used directly from the gun store a short time after the event. The shootout was with suspects in the Bank of America robbery who were armed with full-auto weapons and wearing bullet-proof armor.

"He twisted my arm a bit, and I agreed to let him buy it," Kahn said. "The rest went at the auction." Kahn said nearly all the guns were bought by cast members of the TV show *Soldier Of Fortune, Inc.*

### Media Malfeasance

The auction was for days maligned by the *Las Vegas Sun* and several Los Angeles TV newscasts, despite the fact proceeds went to a worthy cause.

A *Sun* article implied the auction was a fraud, with a 2 October headline that said "Charity to benefit from LV show sales doesn't exist." The story falsely stated the LA Police Department had launched a "criminal investigation" of a classified ad, placed by *Soldier Of Fortune* to promote the auction.

"I wrote the word 'criminal' and that's the only mistake I made," said Cathy Scott, the *Sun* reporter who wrote the story. "I shouldn't have done that, and it has caused a lot of grief for me."

Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown (Ret.) said the article "directly and indirectly libeled" the magazine. No one at *Soldier Of Fortune* was ever contacted by Scott for the story.

Scott said she tried to call *Soldier Of Fortune* and B&B Sales, but reached answering machines. She did not leave a message at either business, saying she had a short deadline.

"I probably should have left a message, but I had no idea the ordeal this was going to turn into," Scott said. "It was one of those things where my editor saw an ad in the morning and said write something for today. I had to start and finish my work that morning. I probably did not try hard enough to contact *Soldier Of Fortune*."

Helen Lloyd, a public information offi-

(top) Los Angeles Police Officer Brett Papworth (left), and actress Melinda Clarke, co-star of the TV series *Soldier Of Fortune, Inc.*, grasp a Remington 11-87 that was used by police. The suspects were wearing bullet-proof armor, so police borrowed weapons from B&B Sales in North Hollywood, up the street from the shootout. (center) Harry J. Humphries, a former U.S. Navy SEAL and technical adviser for the series, examines the shotgun. Most of the shootout weapons were bought by cast members of *Soldier Of Fortune, Inc.* (bottom) The weapons auction raised more than \$7,000 for the memorial fund. A newspaper story in the *Las Vegas Sun* maligned the event. Publisher Robert K. Brown (in background), called the story "gross, incompetent journalism" that directly and indirectly libeled the magazine. The newspaper printed a retraction.

photos: Tim Oest

cer with the LAPD, said much more was wrong with the *Sun's* coverage than the falsely reported "criminal investigation."

"They printed a partial retraction, but they didn't retract much of what we asked them to," Lloyd said. "In one story they said we might refuse to accept proceeds from the sale of the guns. We never said that. At one point we said we were unaware of what was being done with the proceeds, but we never said we were against accepting them."

David Kalish, LAPD commander in the Community Affairs Group, wrote a letter to Mike Kelley, managing editor of the *Sun*, saying the story served only to "create controversy where no controversy exists."

"Despite having received accurate information from my staff, your reporter chose to continue to misrepresent the Los Angeles Police Department's position," the letter continued.

### Guns And The Police

In the 2 Oct. article, Scott quoted LAPD officer Mike Partain, a public relations specialist, saying it would be "counterproductive" for police to benefit from the sale of guns.

Four days later, the *Sun* published another article by Scott saying the "LAPD may not accept the money" from the auction. It paraphrased Lloyd saying a formal request

said. "It was definitely an eyebrow raiser. We didn't think it was true that police would benefit from the sale of guns. I called them and they confirmed my suspicion."

Scott called Partain and faxed him an ad that said the auction proceeds would benefit an "LAPD survivors fund."

"We never had a problem with accepting money from this auction," Partain said. "I merely stated that I would look into the ad that said 'survivors fund,' because I wasn't aware of one. As it turns out, that was an ad for the auction that would benefit our memorial foundation. I knew the auction of B&B guns was legitimate, and I just wanted to make sure someone wasn't holding a copycat auction and making false claims about the guns. From that confusion the whole thing was distorted to discredit a legitimate fundraiser."

### Oh, That Gun Auction

Within hours of Scott's first call, Partain had looked into the matter and was no longer confused. He called Scott and asked that the *Sun* hold off on publishing the story until the facts could be cleared up.

"He did call and ask us to hold the story," Scott said. "I talked to my editors about it, and we decided not to do that."

Scott said the confusion about the gun sale was really caused by the LAPD's desire to put "positive spin" on the story.

"It was obviously an embarrassment to them that guns were going to be sold to benefit police," Scott said. "They wanted to distance themselves. When that got them in trouble, there was a lot of Monday morning quarterbacking going on and it caused a lot of trouble for me."

LA TV stations did almost no reporting, Kahn said, and reported Scott's stories as fact. Still, Kahn said, ranking officials in the LAPD are partially responsible.

"You have some damn good people in the LAPD, and you have some who shouldn't be on the force," Kahn said. "It's the higher-ups, not the rank and file officers, who say things like 'we wouldn't want to put weapons on the street.' I tell you what, the guys who used those weapons in the shootout were damn glad we were there, and that those weapons were available." ❧

photos: Sygma



was never made with the department's memorial fund.

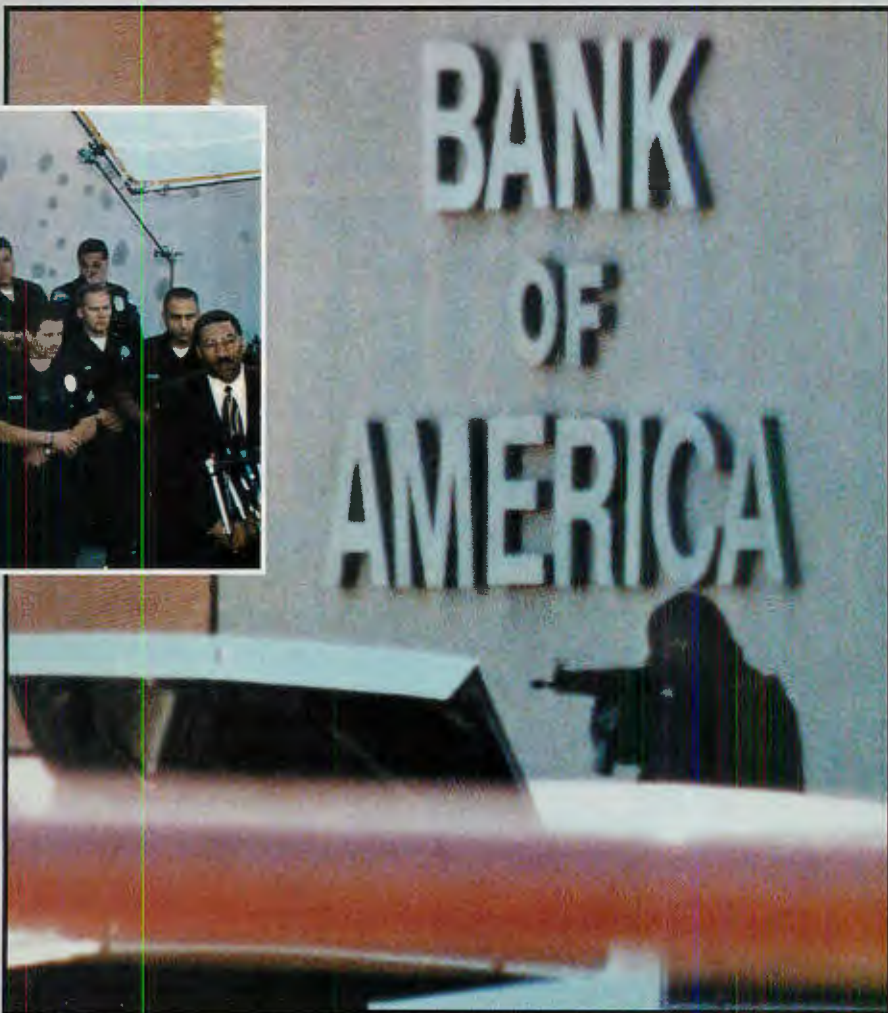
"It's just not true," Lloyd said. "We did not say that. We said we were unaware of any formal request."

Easy to understand, Lloyd said, because the memorial fund isn't technically part of the LAPD. Rather, it's a separate corporation that works closely with the department. The LAPD provides an employee who works as a liaison between the fund and the police department.

The whole controversy may reflect a perception in the mainstream media that all police stand firmly against the gun rights guaranteed in the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Take, for example, Scott's explanation of how the bad press episode began.

"We read an ad in our paper about this auction and it raised an issue with us," Scott



Los Angeles Police came up against heavily armed and armored suspects in the Bank of America robbery. To defeat them, police borrowed guns, capable of piercing armor, from B & B Sales. Two suspects were killed. The guns were auctioned at the Soldier Of Fortune Expo to raise funds for the LAPD Memorial Fund. (inset) LAPD officers involved in shootout gather in front of Bank of America, with then police chief Willie Williams, after a successful shootout with heavily armed robbers in bullet-proof armor.

# ATHLETES IN THE



# OUTBACK

**U.S. Military Accepts The Eco-Challenge Down Under**

## Text & Photos by Robin Postell

NORTHERN QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA — Adventure competitions this decade have gained a reputation as the ultimate test of physical and mental fortitude. Who better to compete than military personnel, all well-versed in the agonies and ecstasies of pushing to the limit and beyond?

These are individuals who know the meaning of pain, defeat and danger.

But military teams haven't done so well, fueling debate about who's toughest and fastest — military-trained soldiers or extreme civilian athletes who taunt fate as a hobby.

As civilians continue winning adventure sports, the debate examines military equip-

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Don't try this at home! The rappel down Herbert River Falls is among several events that make the Eco-Challenge a test of skill, not just fitness. The race has become so difficult and hazardous that entry is no longer open to the public. Rather, it's done by invitation of top teams only. Recognizing the elite nature of the event, Discovery Channel bought the event this year and will air it as a five hour mini-series in April 1998.





Although it's no day at the beach, water provides some of nature's toughest obstacles for Eco-Challenge participants. Pictured here, teams battle Class IV and V rapids on Australia's Herbert River. At other times during the event, participants ascend rock faces next to violent waterfalls, swim through churning gorges with loads of gear, and traverse rain forest rivers on horseback.

ment, interpersonal communication skills, and "hierarchy-type decision making" that discourages feedback from subordinates and flexibility in command.

Eco-challenge founder Mark Burnett — a former Falkland's war paratrooper — questions whether a military team will ever win the race. He says even the best-conditioned soldiers are at a disadvantage because of military "rigidity." Military contestants say he's wrong, and vow to prove it.

### SEALs Rescued From Race

At the '97 Eco-Challenge, eight of the 48 teams contained either active or former military personnel.

There was Team Odyssey, comprised of two Navy SEALs, one Navy diver, and a female civilian. While struggling in 22nd place they were overcome by swells on the sea kayaking leg and had to break the seal on their emergency radio to request rescue. They were winched out of the sea in 26 minutes via helicopter and cables. (Team Dew, which had one former Special Forces member, Mitch Utterback, finished 22nd instead).

A French Foreign Legionnaire competed on Team Paris, which was disqualified after nearly nine days out. Team Ranger, comprised of two Rangers, one female Army surveyor, and one civilian, finished in 28th place — second to last. Team New York's Finest, containing three New York City police officers, and one female Nassau County police officer, came in last. It was the hardest thing they'd ever done in their lives, they said afterwards.

Team Eco-Agents, comprised of FBI agents, were disqualified after nearly 10 days, as was Team Miami Project for Paralysis, also containing Army personnel, after four days.

The poor showing of soldiers isn't for lack of commitment or training. Team Red

Wolf, which shone brightest for the military's reputation in this year's race, is obsessed with winning.

### Ranger Vows To Win

Red Wolf leader Mike Trisler, a noted Army Ranger and West Point grad, knows he can win. His credentials for the task are impeccable. He was the top athlete in his West Point class. He took third in the Best Ranger competition in '93, then second in '94, and first in '95. In Trisler's mind, winning the Eco-Challenge should be just a matter of putting together the right team and taking time to train.

Despite his confidence this year, Trisler had to settle for 11th place.

Among American teams that finished, Red Wolf came in second. Like military teams, American teams traditionally don't fare well. Teams from New Zealand, France and Australia normally take the prize. Adventure competitions are respected traditions in their countries, which is often cited as an advantage.

It's not much consolation for Trisler, who took no comfort in 11th place.

This year, it took seven days, three hours and seven minutes for Team Red Wolf to cross the finish line off the beach in Cairns, Australia and complete the 528 km course. After the race, Trisler laid on a table beneath the medic's tent, with badly blistered feet. He wore a look of pensive weariness. The blond California surfer/lifeguard sighed.

"It's going terrible," he said, "We didn't come in first."

Trisler and his team were in the 1996 race, in British Columbia, where he chose to race with a broken hand — a move that cost him \$8,000 and chronic pain. Having broken it only two weeks before the race, Trisler's hand was still in a cast at the starting line. When it proved cumbersome, he ripped off the cast. Today, his hand is held together by a surgeon's concoction of wires and four screws — a constant reminder of the extremes Trisler has taken in his quest for a win.

As Trisler raced with a badly broken arm in '96, his team lost one member to a knee injury, and continued through the race unranked before finishing in the top 10. Trisler was disappointed, and became more determined than ever.

### The Winning Team

Team Eco-Internet, which this year crossed the finish line in 5 days, 19 hours and 46 minutes for the win, also took first place in '96. Trisler, like many others, had watched the winning team's progress with intense scrutiny. They were long-time adventure racing veterans — professional adventure

racers. None were American. Team Red Wolf had been ahead of them in the beginning this year, and raced alongside them for a time. But in the end, Team Eco-Internet had passed up everyone.

"Team Eco-Internet did amaze me. They were all racers and concerned only with winning," recalled Trisler. "They were just going balls-out until they were in first place. Then they just tried to bury teams. Their efficiency of movement is greater than everybody else's based on their experience. Their speed in the transition areas was unbelievable. Twenty to 30 minutes and they were out and running again. We stayed much longer than that."

Team Eco-Internet was comprised of Robert Nagle, a 38-year-old Irish-born molecular modeling researcher from Harvard; Keith Murray, a 35-year-old medical doctor; Murray's 33-year-old wife, Andrea, both from Christchurch, New Zealand; and 41-year-old window washer John Howard, of Christchurch.

It was a team with a knack for doing things right. They didn't worry about the other teams. They studied the maps and did what they knew would get them from point A to point B in the shortest time. They had done it enough to know when to take risks and when to be cautious. And John Howard was the only man who had ever won both an Eco-Challenge and a Raid Gauloises, the French-run adventure competition upon which Eco-founder Mark Burnett based his event.

"The competition increased tenfold this year," Trisler said.

### Only The Elite

This year's race was invitation only. Discovery Channel had bought the event, sinking \$5.5 million into it, and only the creme-de-la-creme were involved. Like the previous year, Discovery would run a five hour mini-series on the event (scheduled to



The mountain biking leg of the race adds grueling physical torture to the danger incurred in other events. Racers burn about 10,000 calories a day and replenish barely half that much. Participants hallucinate. Some puke. Others cry. It's garden-variety hell indigenous to adventure sports.



Team Eco-Internet won consecutive first place finishes in the 1996 and '97 Eco-Challenges. Pictured here, the team runs to the beach where members launch kayaks into the crocodile-infested waters of Great Barrier Reef.

air for 110 million viewers worldwide in April 1998).

This year, teams consisted of four men, rather than five. For the first time, there were no support crews at transition areas. Instead of meeting up with their crews, teams gathered food and equipment in gear drop boxes at designated areas. The changes, Trisler said, were good.

"Less people to worry about," he said.

Most of the old fundamental rules still applied: No assistance. Four men in, four

men out.

Trisler has had the goal of putting together an all-military team for the Eco-Challenge for two years now. He knows it will produce a winning team, despite skeptic views.

"I want to see if adventure racing can become part of the all-Army sports program and I want to be the coach of the team," Trisler said. "I know they have the biathlon team in New Hampshire and I wanted to put together an All Army adventure racing team that does races like the Eco, the Raid

Gauloises — there are hundreds of these races now. It's probably one of the fastest growing sports in the country at the moment."

### Crocodiles in Hell

Competitors in the '97 Eco-Challenge trekked through the cutback across lava rock-covered terrain, canoed down a crocodile infested river, rappelled and ascended up looming rock faces next to violent waterfalls, swam with all their gear across churning gorges, mountain biked through wet



Teams use sails to gain speed on the kayaking leg of the race. Team Odyssey, comprised of two Navy SEALs, a Navy diver and a female civilian, had to break the seal on their emergency radio to request rescue while kayaking. The call for help came after they were overcome by swells. A helicopter winched them into the air 26 minutes later.

rainforests, through rivers and countryside, rafted through Class IV and V rapids, passed through more rainforest and river on horseback, trekked across Queensland's highest peak, and finished it off with a 79 km sea kayaking leg with angry squalls threatening to swamp them.

"It's the same stuff you do in the military," said Trisler. "It's running, it's hiking, it's swimming, navigating, teamwork. It's coed, which is a big issue right now in the military. I think it would be a fantastic opportunity for the military as far as publicity, as a recruiting tool — just something the military could be proud of."

Blaine Reeves of Team Miami Project for Paralysis, an Army recruiter in Orlando, Florida, also won the Best Ranger competition and has participated in all the Eco-Challenges since their inception in 1995. Though his team was disqualified in Eco '97, Reeves remains undaunted.

"The whole reason I came into the race in '95 (Utah) was to get a taste of the race and see what it was about," he said. "I never expected to win it, just get across the finish line to see what happened. Because of that, every year I come I learn a little more."

### Maturity, Experience Count

Certainly, experience plays a large role in the success of Eco teams. The average age of the winning competitor is 35 (no one under 30 has ever won). It takes a level of commitment that 20-somethings rarely possess.

"Last year the team that won was the team which slept most and made the best decisions," said Burnett prior to the race. "This is a sign of experience. I strongly believe that the team which combines experience with mental strength will have the winning edge over a more youthful, physically agile team. Seasoned Eco-Challenge competitors are quick to verify that the event is a race of the mind with strength derived from good mental and emotional coping mechanisms. Successful competitors will adopt a psychological approach and be quick to rely on fellow team members for support when the going gets rough. This I think is the ultimate challenge."

As race founder and war veteran, British-born Burnett has watched the military teams in his race with great interest. He holds out little faith.

### "Rigid" Military Teams

"Do you know the reason why military teams don't do well in this competition?" he asked. "Because of their rigidity. Their rigidity."

Reeves, along with every other military participant, vehemently disagrees.

"This stuff about military personnel being inflexible is b.s.," said Reeves. "In the Best Ranger competition everything doesn't go your way — stuff happens, things change, and as long as you keep focused on the mission itself and know that the mission has to be accomplished, you'll do whatever it takes to complete the mission. That's kind of like the Ranger Creed. You complete the mission



Navy SEAL Nate Smith was on Team Odyssey. This year, eight of 48 teams contained either active or former military personnel, and none finished in the top 10. Smith and his team, in fact, were rescued from water while struggling in 22nd place. The poor showing of military teams has fueled debate about the compatibility of military conditioning and adventure sports.



though you be the lone survivor. But you're not going to be the lone survivor in this because you have to finish with four people. The goal is to complete the mission."

And Trisler agreed.

"Burnett said that no military teams would ever win. I highly disagree with that," said Trisler. "I think military personnel are some of the fittest people in the world, and that is the primary ingredient to winning this race. They're also very smart and have a lot of common sense, which is also a big advantage. In any organization you have to have the right people put together. With Team Eco-Internet, they were the top adventure racers in the world. Those guys had all competed on different teams before in the past and just got together because they were the best."

Given the opportunity and sponsorship, I could do the same thing, if not with military members, then with all American members."

Trisler pointed out that the Best Ranger and the Eco-Challenge are pretty much identical except in duration.

"In the Best Ranger you do not sleep for 2 ½ days. You don't even have the option. In the Eco you can sleep whenever you want, although you don't, of course," added

Trisler. "They are very similar races as far as pain and intensity and as far as how you train for it. The Best Ranger is geared more towards military events, like technical military skills. But as far as the teamwork goes, it's the same as the Eco, only you have two people as opposed to four."

### Garden Variety Hell

Like last year's race, teams were given maps of the course the day before the start. Over an 11-day period they crossed 528 km of rough terrain through three separate ecosystems — the Outback, rainforests, and Great Barrier Reef. In the end, 29 teams finished ranked. Nineteen teams were disqualified for various reasons, ranging from exhaustion to dissension, with six of them finishing unranked.



(left) Army Ranger Mike Trisler led the Red Wolf team to an 11th place finish this year, much to his dismay. Trisler has gone to extremes in his quest for first place, including the time he ripped a cumbersome cast off his broken arm — a move that led to orthopedic surgery and lingering pain. After the race, Trisler laid on a table beneath the medic's tent with badly blistered feet (above). The blond California surfer/life-guard says he'll put together an all-military team that will win first in a future Eco-Challenge.

Teams faced constant threat of snakes and crocodiles, poisonous plants, spear grass, and permanent physical injury. They burned about 10,000 calories a day and replenished barely half that much. They carried packs weighing up to 45 pounds. And for their torture, each team paid a \$2,500 entry fee, plus travel, equipment and accommodation expenses.

Only the winner takes significant prize money in Eco-Challenge. Team Eco-Internet took home \$25,000 — not much when split four ways, especially considering each team arrived with approximately \$20,000 worth of equipment.

Countless injuries were incurred and several rescues were made. One French team member from Team ARS, which placed 6th, rubbed his scrotum raw on the mountain biking leg and almost couldn't

*Continued on page 67*



breaking open the rifle or removing the charging handle. The mount is held to a flat top upper receiver with a full-length locking side bar with two allen head bolts. This insures positive lock up even on worn receiver rails.

Adding a night vision scope to this setup provides the operator with both a critical tactical edge over his opponent and the capability of surgical accuracy in the dark — the very environment in which most contact with the enemy occurs. Modern night-vision devices are ultimately judged by how far out they permit the end user to detect, recognize and identify potential targets. A brief description of how night-vision equipment works is in order.

In both second and third generation systems, the objective lens collects light that cannot be seen with the naked eye and focuses it on an image intensifier. A photo cathode inside the image intensifier absorbs this light energy and converts it into electrons. Passing first through a micro channel plate that multiplies them thousands of times, these electrons are drawn toward a phosphor screen. When this highly intensified electron image strikes the phosphor screen, it causes the screen to emit visible light. Since the phosphor screen emits this light in precisely the same pattern and intensity that the light was collected by the

objective lens, the bright image seen in the ocular corresponds exactly to the scene being viewed. Third generation night-vision equipment uses gallium-arsenide for the photo cathode. The micro channel plate is coated with an ion barrier film to increase tube life. The very best third-generation equipment provides very good to excellent low-light-level performance and long tube life. In addition, recent milspec-quality tubes feature no perceptible distortion.

The image intensifier resolution of state-of-the-art night vision is often measured by a unit known as "line pairs per millimeter" (lp/mm). This is usually determined from a 1951 Air Force Resolving Power Test Target. All the horizontal and vertical lines and the spaces between them must be distinguishable to qualify for a particular pattern. The higher the number of line pairs per millimeter, the better the unit's ability to provide a sharp image. Most Russian-made night vision will provide no more than 20-30 lp/mm. The very best American-made night vision features resolution of 45-64+ lp/mm.

There are several other parameters that influence the quality of night-vision equipment. One is the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR), which is a measure of the light signal reaching the eye divided by the perceived noise as seen by the eye. A tube's SNR determines the low-light resolution of the image tube. Thus, the higher the SNR value, the better the tube's ability to resolve objects with good contrast under low-light conditions. Another important factor is photosensitivity,

or the ability of the photo cathode to produce an electrical response when subjected to light waves (photons). The higher the value, the better the ability to produce a visible image under darker conditions.

An additional important concept is the system gain. Gain is the number of times a night vision device amplifies light input. System gain is measured as the light output divided by the light input and is what the user actually sees. This value is usually in the thousands and U.S. military night vision equipment operates in the 2,000 to 3,000 range. The higher the value for system gain the better, up to a point. Russian night vision devices frequently increase the gain far too high in order to achieve a brighter (but never clearer) image at the expense of tube life.

Two currently popular pocket night vision scopes used by military and law enforcement organizations are the ITT 6010A and Litton M983. Both feature 45 lp/mm third generation tubes of very high quality. They both feature standard 1X magnification and a 40-degree field of view. Highly effective for short to medium range surveillance, in totally dark environments, an integral IR light-emitting diode provides illumination for close-range observations.

The ITT is a \$3,600 unit. The Litton M983 costs \$3,900 and comes standard in a goggle mode. It can be flipped up out of the way or quickly detached. Both of these units can be purchased from G.G.&G., as well as the adaptors required to mount them on the G.G.&G. integrated rail system. ☒

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## I Was There

Continued from page 20

SF friends. While awaiting their insertion, I photographed and sketched the crash area.

O.G. and Arlo joined me in the grisly task of collecting and wrapping the body parts. We were unanimous in our pledge that not one piece of an American was going to be deserted.

Two hours after I'd rappelled in, the chopper arrived back on station, hovering over us. The rope was lowered and the two bodies were tied with great care into the end of the rope and slowly lifted away, ferried to the LZ, then translocated to the RCAF Mi-8, for their final flight back Phnom Penh. Another hour passed.

With ominous, rumbling, black clouds rolling our way, Grady attempted several times to get back to us, but a wall of ensuing fog and blistering rain echoed "Hell, no."

In addition, word arrived that his aircraft was diverted to another mission back in Vietnam. Arlo and I were stranded, cold, soaked and worried.

We threw together a lean-to with tree branches and pieces of the plane, collected rain water, scoured the vicinity for berries and other edible vegetation, then settled in for a stay of unknown duration. Armed with a single AK, with 120 rounds, and a Makarov, with 21 rounds, we set up alternating security watches.

With nightfall, the temperature plummeted nearly 30 degrees and the annoying, miserable rain continued in the blackness making listening for approaching hostiles impossible.

By 1100, on 3 May, the weather had still not improved. I decided we would chance it and hump out, enemy contact and minefields be damned.

As we began our arduous, and cautious, descent, the radio crackled with broken transmissions. We picked up enough: Another attempt had kicked off to snatch us.

Four hours dragged by before an extraction rope dropped and dangled overhead. Arlo and I tied in. The bird lifted, then banked away, its pilot no doubt joyous to be heading out of the AO and KR gunners.

When the helicopter set down, 10 miles away, I thanked the pilot, an "FNG." Grady, the original "driver," had returned to Vietnam, emphatically detailed his SITREP to his boss, Ed Behne, also a retired Army pilot. Grady bitched flat-out that he never left anyone behind in Vietnam, and he sure as hell wasn't going to in Cambodia. Both Behne and Grady crossed back into Cambodia to complete the mission.

Without significant assistance from the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, a tossed-together, dedicated, and valorous, team of Americans recovered the remains of two of their own; remains which were returned to their grieving families time zones away, at home in the United States. ✕

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## Cowardly Killers

Continued from page 57

impede the progress of the teams. Normally, it is considered ideal to work in the dry seasons only, but when the contract requires that clearance be undertaken during the rainy season, the teams have to make particular improvisations to enable them to produce the same quality of work. Generally, vapor sampling would not be undertaken during heavy downpours, and afterwards it is ideal to wait for the temperature to rise before the operation commences. In politically unstable countries, operators are often viewed with suspicion or sometimes it is not in the interest of the inhabitants to have certain roads cleared. Mines laid behind the clearance teams is another occurrence that causes concern. In Mozambique, where a contract was undertaken at the height of the civil war in 1991, operators were ambushed regularly and escaped mainly because of the armor and off-road ability of the Casspir vehicles.

### Tracking "Troop" Efficiency

In the operations headquarters everything is mapped and documented on computer, as it is necessary to compare the performance of the dogs with actual mines and munitions found. Each dog is monitored carefully to ensure reliability and to make sure that there are no "bad habits" creeping into the system. Dog handlers maintain that dogs are like people in a way, sometimes temperamental and not always producing their best. It is, therefore, necessary for the handlers to know their dogs exceptionally well.

Mechem uses mainly German shepherds, which they start fairly young to establish their natural smelling ability. After about six months of intensive training the dogs are usually ready to start out operationally and are continually retrained to keep them at a fine edge.

A few dogs were lost after being bitten by tsetse flies in Mozambique, a problem in all low-lying tropical areas. Nine of the 21 species of these flies carry the dreaded sleeping sickness, that can be fatal to man and domestic animals.

Dr. Joynt still visits his teams in the field, even though he has a busy schedule attending to invitations and conferences all over the world. He enjoys being among his men and to be challenged by them to find new solutions to new problems they are confronting. Sometimes these discussions can be quite heated affairs and outsiders could easily get the wrong impression. There is no place for sensitive feelings and blunt, if somewhat colorful, frankness is the order of the day. Dr. Joynt maintains that diplomacy and tact belong elsewhere, but in spite of that there exists a loyalty between Vernon Joynt and his men that some military leaders could only dream of.

*A technical manager, Frank van der Waal lives and writes in southern Africa. ✕*



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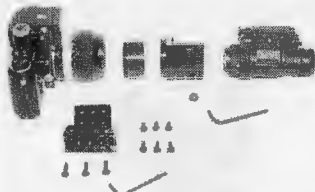
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## Athletes In The Outback

Continued from page 63

continue. But he bandaged the wound with duct tape — a staple of adventure racing — and kept on going. A Swedish man got stuck up on the ropes section for more than an hour. People hallucinated. Others puked. Some cried. It was the garden-variety hell indigenous to adventure competitions.

### Problems Designed By Founder

Burnett wanted teams to have as many problems as possible. He intentionally started the race at 5:30 p.m., instead of in the morning, to make navigation more difficult and force teams to make crucial decisions about sleep.

"Psychological hurdle number one," said Burnett at the start of the race. "Like never before it will be vital for teams to navigate well. Starting at night will make it even harder to evaluate when it will be the right time to sleep. And competitors must sleep during some stage of the race."

Looking back, Trisler pinpointed Team Red Wolf's problems. First night, being the sole navigator on the team, Trisler had made a navigational error that forced them to walk two or three extra clicks. Trisler's error had cost the team 90 minutes, dropping it from eighth place to 20th.

Then at night, during the horseback leg, three of their horses refused to cross a river. This took four more crucial hours away from them. They couldn't rest because there was nowhere to put the horses. So while team member Norm Thayer went all the way back to the horse pick-up point to grab a guide, Trisler, Thayer's wife Tracyn, and Gary took turns. One would stand up holding the horses, while the other two slept. But calling it sleep would be a stretch, they said, as it was a struggle to keep warm.

"We packed a lot lighter this year and didn't bring any sleeping gear. We had no idea it would get so cold out there," Trisler recalled. "We slept a total of seven hours the entire time we were out there but we really just lay there shivering most of the time. If I had to do it all over again we would have slept just when it got dark, while it was still warm."

Team Eco-Internet, and the teams which followed close behind them, made fewer errors, had fewer problems, and finished in phenomenal time. Team Eco-Internet finished in roughly half the time as the final group to cross the finish line — Team New York's Finest.

### Racers And Adventurers

Trisler points out there are two kinds of people who do the Eco-Challenge. Some are the racers, such as Team Eco-Internet, and others are the adventurers.

"I'm a racer," said Trisler. "I'm strictly concerned about where I finish and that's it. I want to win. Finish first. That's my only concern. I'm not concerned about seeing kangaroos or how pretty it is, or having fun.

It's really not that fun. It's fun in that it is an extreme challenge and it's something that's self-gratifying, but being cold, hungry, and having your pain factor off the richter scale isn't fun. What makes it fun is doing your best, and winning, for me. I think the best thing for anybody who is doing this type of race is to determine what kind of racer they are. You have to be on a team with somebody who is like you. You can't have three adventurers and one racer on a team because that will cause strategy problems and indecision."

The public focuses on military teams when they enter these kinds of competitions. The pressure is enormous for them to succeed. But many have argued, as does Burnett, that military personnel don't have

the interpersonal skills needed to pull a team through such a grueling experience. You have to bend. You have to deal with the pain thresholds of not one, but four individuals. You have to communicate, not demand.

"There are a couple of crucial differences in this kind of competition and the military," Trisler said. "First, in doing the Eco-Challenge there seems to be four or five chiefs and no Indians in the civilian world. It's very democratic. It's usually whatever's the highest ratio is how the vote goes. In the military, there is a chain of command and the hierarchy-type decision-making where one person makes a decision, one person's in charge. In the Eco, nobody's in charge and everybody's in charge."

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## Chain Of Command

Trisler pointed out that in the military, placing all the decision-making on one person can be a big burden sometimes. If that person is not capable of making the decision then the wrong decision gets made.

"A lot of people don't ask for opinions from their subordinates," he added. "I think that in the Eco-Challenge sometimes people don't want to give in, want to do things their way. Not being under any chain of command, they can do that. They can argue that. There tends to be less decisions made because no one's in charge. And that is a huge challenge."

Another difference involves equipment.

"In this race you can use the best equipment on the market, stuff that's just come out," said Trisler. "In the military a lot of the equipment was developed ten years ago. It takes so long for the best equipment to get down to the actual units and soldiers. By the time you get it there's better stuff out there. Like the boots — the Army's still using the old leather jungle boots. There's much better footwear out there. Same with clothing. We're using top, great clothing, stuff that's much better than the old cotton BDUs."

Georgia-based writer Robin Postell also covered the '96 Eco-Challenge marathon, in Canada, for SOF with an article titled "Bushwhacking In B.C." (May '97). The next Eco-Challenge will be held in Morocco in late 1998. ✕

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## Rebels Without A Cause

Continued from page 47

At Boajibu we veer east. Crossing the Panguma River near Dodo, water splashing against the truck, our driver halts in the black jungle darkness. Panguma, he tells us, is controlled by the AFRC. Hassan says that we need to hump 15km north to Komajor lines, near Borni. Easier said than done: many Komajors have died trying to run this gauntlet of AFRC checkpoints to Tongo Field.

We trot toward the first checkpoint. Hassan bends under the rope bisecting the road and looks around. Snoring comes from a hut, but we see no soldiers. We hug the tree line on the outskirts of town, walking in the forest shadow. Candles flicker up and down the main street. Lanterns glow in windows. We hear girls laughing. The moon is swollen and amber, almost full. Good visibility. Slipping behind a hut, we can hear people trudging near the road, gravel crunching under their boots. They whisper in Krio. Soldiers? Hassan is not sure. Probably miners. We keep moving. I try to fix our position from the stars. We are heading south. No, north. I keep just behind the point man, my shoes occasionally catching the back of his sandals in the dark.

I squint, looking for checkpoints on the road. We never find any. No-man's land! The Komajor on point splashes into a creek.

Parting the bulrushes, he wades to the other side where a trail cuts into the jungle — heading east according to my compass. An hour later we drop, wearily, at the first Komajor position north of Tongo Field. We hear the dull *thump-thump* of AFRC heavy mortars pounding the strip mines a mile away, but the Komajors abandoned that real estate days ago. Hassan explains that his Komajors, unlike the RUF, rely on popular support to survive. So to Hassan, the miners living north of Tongo Field are more valuable than diamonds. This is where the Komajors will fight — not in the diamond pits, but guarding the miners and refugees near Bomi.

### The New Ecumenicals

At dawn we shake the dew off our clothes and pass through the encampment. Hassan and the other four Muslim Komajors wash their hands with my canteen water. They face Mecca, roll out reed mats and pray. The Catholics scrub themselves too: all the Komajors must purify themselves before battle. They circle around Hassan as he wails a long Komajor chant.

When he opens his eyes, Hassan sees another Komajor officer, also dressed in black, striding over to us. The officer looks at me. He spits into the road. They talk. Except for their murmurs, there is dead silence: The shelling stopped! Hassan points to a tangled cassava and cucumber plot to the right of three buildings. In front of us, a clearing tangled with elephant grass and corn. He barks orders in Mende. The Komajors form a line facing south. Four shotguns, two AKs, one 12-gauge flare pistol loaded with shotgun rounds, and two machetes are all that stands between this village and the People's Army. Each shotgunner carries seven rounds. The riflemen have only one magazine for each AK-47. All together, they have enough ammunition for a brief firefight. Maybe five minutes of combat. Maybe. Doubtful.

The Komajor officer stares at me. He asks, "Where is your gun?" I smile. "My camera is my weapon." He grimaces and shakes his head. "And truth is my ammunition," I finish. All the Komajors laugh.

### No Retreat

No one will retreat, Hassan assures me. Minutes tick by. Finally, we spot the first People's Army soldier rushing at us, 400m away. He crouches and fires, screaming. Bullets kick up the dirt in front of us.

He looks like a kid. Other RUF soldiers bunch up behind him. They run right at us. The Komajors stand still, gritting their teeth. When the attackers come within 200m of us, the two AK-47 riflemen open up, sending the boys bolting for cover. The lead runners cower behind a rock cistern, snatching turkey-peeks and firing wildly. The middle Komajor gunner carefully aims his AK at the cistern. Bullets pulverize the sandstone wall. I wheel, trying to snap a picture of the wall but cannot get it in focus. Bullets zip by us. I twist and snap two quick shots of the Komajors. Damn it! They're moving!

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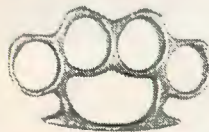
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Hassan raises his unwounded right arm, grasping a harpoon. He yells and the Komajors charge. I race alongside, snapping film. The boys behind the cistern fire, then turn and run. An RPG missile whizzes by, slamming into the elephant grass behind Hassan. Dirt sprays into the air and I can feel pebbles and dirt inside my shirt spilling down my back. The Komajors hum. Hassan's voice, a sing-song of prayers, pierces the air.

Another RPG rockets to my right and explodes in the dust. My camera thuds heavily into my breastbone. My ears pop. My hand burns. Shredded elephant grass drifts down on us like green feathers. Crouching, I open my fist. Little flakes of rock and steel cut into my palm. Rising, I wipe the blood on my khakis and stagger to catch up with the Komajors. My head pounding, my heart drumming in my chest, I hear the Komajor riflemen rattling short, disciplined bursts at the retreating AFRC soldiers. The shotgunners hold their fire the entire time — they know that they must close to within yards of their enemy before they can kill him. Hassan turns around, faces his Komajors, and drops his arm. The AKs immediately cease firing. The Komajors consolidate near a miner's house, where a gleaming basket of fish sits on the front lawn. The firefight could not have lasted more than a minute. The Komajors never flinched while exposing themselves completely to enemy fire. Bullets flew by them. Missiles exploded. But no one was hit. Miracle.

"You are either the bravest sons of bitches in the world," I shout. "Or the craziest!" Or both, I think to myself. Maybe just the luckiest.

"You see," Hassan explains, "it is the magic mystic power. Those boys knew it, that is why they ran." Hassan is right — once the RUF boys knew that the Komajors were preparing to charge, they ran.

### No Quarter

They must think the Komajors are invincible too. We wait all afternoon for the RUF to return. At 1700, mortars open up and two rounds fall behind us. To our right, rounds continue to fall for the next hour. Just after dusk, Hassan sees the first AFRC soldier breaking through the jungle into the clearing. The Komajors line up again. This time, two AFRC soldiers drop near the timber line and begin firing a "motor" gun.

Rounds rake into the Komajor line. Two shotgunners fly apart. Squinting in the twilight, I watch as the two Komajor riflemen lean forward and fire all their remaining rounds at the machine gun. It falls silent.

Out of ammo, the riflemen drop the AKs and pick up the bloody shotguns. They jerk the ammo belts off the dead Komajors and sling them over their shoulders. Hassan raises his harpoon again. The Komajors sprint headlong into the AFRC attack, shotguns blasting.

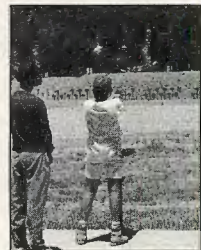
Jogging alongside them, Abdul, who accompanied me all the way from Pundaro, fires at the AFRC soldiers with his flare-pis-

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tol cum shotgun. As a gift, I had given him my K-Bar. He tugs it from his burlap tunic and disappears into the battle smoke. I see him waiver, then fold, clutching his gut. He told me yesterday that when the war ended he wanted to go to college in the United States and become an airline pilot. He asked me to introduce him, when he arrived, to Michael Jordan.

He died trying to stuff his stomach back inside his skin. He was 19 years old. I never found the K-Bar.

Neither side takes prisoners in this war. Without surgeons or medicine, the Komajors cannot care for their wounded. If you get hit, you die. If not now, then in a few hours. Or tomorrow. Or next week.

Their ammo exhausted, the Komajors' machetes go to work — first they hack at the feet of retreating soldiers, cutting through boot leather as if it were paper. Then they return to chop up any AFRC wounded trying to crawl into the brush.

Today, none of the AFRC bodies stirs. In the moonlight, I can see the machetes rising up, then stashing down at the ground. I hear only one scream. A strange gargled yelp. Then silence.

*A former Marine, freelance photojournalist Carl Prine was infiltrated into Sierra Leone by a diamond smuggler, anxious for the world to know the true situation in her homeland. Eventually pursued by both sides, he smuggled himself out.* ✕

## Nukes In 'Nam

Continued from page 39

alarm bells should have rung loudly.

The Energy Department has no explanation for this, but Heusser points out that for at least a year after the fall of Saigon, there was no accounting of any kind at the Dalat reactor.

Someone may have walked off with the plutonium in the chaos following South Vietnam's demise. "Corruption is so rampant in Vietnam that it is entirely possible that someone saw an opportunity to make some money," says one Defense Department official who regularly deals with Vietnam.

### Plutonium In A Car Trunk

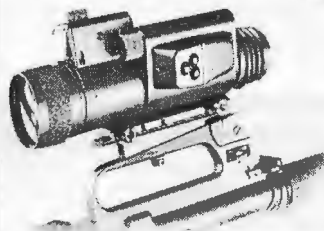
That might explain the persistent stories about plutonium for sale coming out of Southeast Asia. Beginning in the early 1990s, press accounts reported small quantities of plutonium offered for sale to the highest bidder, always with the understanding it came from Vietnam. One American businessman said that he was approached by a Thai military officer who claimed to have plutonium in the trunk of his car and "wanted to sell it to the U.S. in order to prevent it from going on the open market." Upon return to the United States he claims to have contacted the CIA, which sent a representative to debrief him.

"Vietnam has a history of suspiciousness that will not be overcome simply because we now have relations with Hanoi," says



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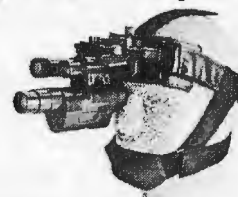
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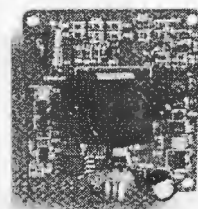
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one Defense Department analyst. “Besides, they know they have the upper hand on this and they will not give in without extracting something valuable in return. Look for a long fight on this.”

*Dale Andradé is a long-time contributor to SOF, specializing in coverage of elite military units.* ✕

## Heavy Metal Rescue

Continued from page 39

his actions will have ramifications for years to come.

“This is the kind of thing people's careers are lost and made on in government,” Hendrickson said. “The loss of more than even 10 milligrams of plutonium these days is a big deal in bureaucracy. It's a big deal to people who have nothing better to do than do what the government tells them to, which is to keep track of plutonium. It's used by everyone involved — the good guys and bad — to scare and threaten people.”

At the plant, the men inventoried 67 radioactive fuel elements, including the starters source, that would be removed in 13 ½-ton drums, called casks, lined with lead and concrete.

They flew back to Saigon that night and began holding meetings and making plans for full-scale evacuation of the reactor the following Sunday, 30 March 1975.

A plane would land and quickly drop off Horan, Hendrickson and the needed equipment, such as a forklift. A C-130 would return when they were ready to load it. Because of the enemy's proximity, nobody could assure Horan and Hendrickson of a return flight to Saigon.

“They told us if they couldn't land a plane to get us out we were basically on our own,” Horan said.

If stranded in Dalat, the men were told to walk 50 miles to the coast under the cover of night, a trip estimated to take three days.

The men said fine, and asked for some basic survival gear. No can do, said embassy officials, explaining again their limit of 100 troops in Vietnam.

So Saturday afternoon, Horan and Hendrickson hit the streets of Saigon to bargain for U.S. military equipment they might need to escape. For a total of \$25, they obtained a backpack, hammocks, a water bottle, compass, two hats and two pair of jungle boots.

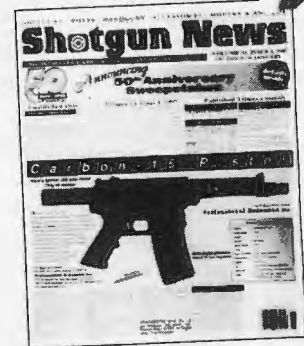
They left Saigon on a C-47 Sunday, 30 March, with three tons of Serum and two photographers, including White House photographer David Kennerly.

Meanwhile, enemy factions from the north were busy preparing to invade Dalat, with troops on three sides of town. One outpost was established eight miles north of the city at 0800 the morning of the nuke evacuation. Intelligence estimates warned the enemy could be in Dalat by 1600 hours that day.

Continued on page 81

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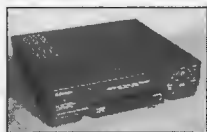
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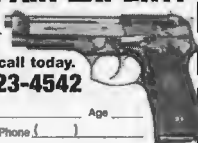
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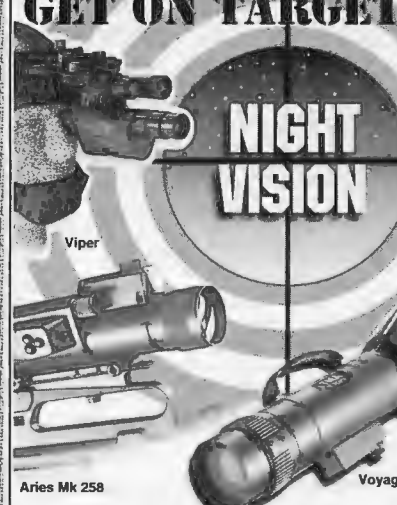
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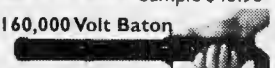
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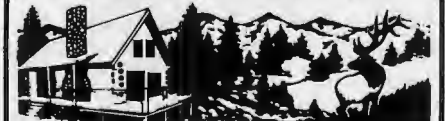
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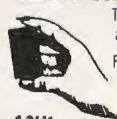
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## Heavy Metal Rescue

Continued from page 72

At 1045 hours the plane landed at Cam Ly, the Dalat airport. More than 100 refugees were gathered at the airport, hoping to jump on the plane before it left.

"The co-pilot notified me that they would not go into the taxiway because of the refugees," Horan wrote in his diary. "The engines would be kept running, with the cargo door open. We would jump out and the aircraft would leave."

Horan and Hendrickson arrived at the reactor site at 1150 hours, where they quickly retrieved fuel rods from the water, with their bare hands, and placed them into casks.

"We had to work very fast to reduce our radiation exposure," Hendrickson said.

The men estimated their radiation exposure at the facility was equal to what one gets taking three or four transcontinental airline flights.

Once in the casks, the fuels were ready for shipment to the airport in military trucks Horan had rented from Vietnamese with a personal credit card. It never appeared on his Visa bill.

Distant shots rang out as the men proceeded with a final inspection tour of their work.

"Last shot ricocheted near me," Horan wrote in his diary. "Ended inspection tour."

Meanwhile, Horan says, muck-a-

mucks at the Department of Defense and the embassy in Saigon were arguing about how to complete the mission. The Air Force wanted to grab-and-go quickly, taking only Horan, Hendrickson and the reactor fuels. Ambassador Graham Martin had bigger plans, and ultimately prevailed.

"The ambassador wanted the Air Force to bring a bunch of refugees out of Dalat when they left," Horan said. "He said no refugees out, no mission. Blow up the reactor."

Within 90 minutes of that ultimatum the Department of Defense agreed to take refugees. The C-130, which would rescue Horan, Hendrickson and the barrels of radioactive fuel, was free to leave for Dalat.

At the airport, about 150 refugees were waiting. The men spent the next few hours loading reactor fuels and equipment onto the plane, with the help of a forklift.

Hendrickson and Horan returned to the reactor that night to recover log books, loading records and the neutron source. At 0200 hours Monday, 31 March, the men left the facility to sleep at the home of Max Prosser, an official with the U.S. Agency for Industrial Development.

The next morning, Horan and Hendrickson continued taking drums and equipment to the airport and loaded them onto the plane.

At 1315, on 31 March, the flight crew prepared the plane for takeoff, loaded with

tons of fuel and equipment, Hendrickson, Horan and dozens of refugees.

"For me, that was the scariest part of the whole mission," Horan said. "I think we were about 3,000 pounds overweight."

Not wanting to end up like the plane at the end of the strip, the pilot backed his plane to the very end of the runway, for maximum takeoff room. Using nearly all the runway, Horan recalls, the plane slowly lifted off.

The plane flew into the valley to gain airspeed, rather than climbing over the mountains as usual.

"Missed house in valley by 35 feet," Horan wrote in his log.

The plane arrived safely in Saigon at 1440 hours. At 1950 hours it took off again, landing 4½ hours later at Clark Air Force Base, Philippines. The reactor materials found a home at the Hanford Engineering Development Laboratory, in Richland.

Hendrickson and Horan were given an honorable citation for the mission by the USRDA, and \$500 each.

A month later, Hendrickson returned to Vietnam to help the widow of his late friend, Le Von Thi.

"She asked me to help get her two sisters out of Vietnam," Hendrickson said.

This time he was alone, with almost no support from the U.S. Embassy. The mission was successful.

— Wayne Laugesen

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## The Kennedys Never Learn

**T**he U.S. Army runs the School of the Americas (SOA) at Fort Benning, Ga., for Latin American military and police officers. House Representative Joseph Kennedy, D-Mass., is hell-bent on closing the place down.

Because of the Kennedy clan's role in pushing us into the Vietnam quagmire, to serve their own misguided ambitions, it's important to examine the spin that Congressman Kennedy is puffing out about SOA. It's too late to do anything about the 1960s propaganda, but it's not too late to expose the myths that Kennedy is now promoting.

**Myth:** Graduates of the school are responsible for all the atrocities in Latin America.

**Fact:** Since 1946, almost 60,000 students have graduated from the school. Less than 300 have been linked to war crimes. Even major American police departments don't have such favorable good-guy-to-bad-guy ratios.

The bad-guy names often cited by Kennedy include Manuel Noriega of Panama; Roberto D'Aubuisson of El Salvador; Hugo Banzer of Bolivia; and Julio Alpirez of Guatemala.

Noriega attended the Infantry officer basic course. D'Aubuisson attended a radio-operator course. Banzer attended the armor course. Alpirez attended the staff course. These courses, taught throughout the years to hundreds of thousands of U.S. and Allied officers, teach war-fighting, not "evil-empire" dirty tricks, as claimed by Kennedy.

**Myth:** Manuals discovered at the SOA prove torture training was conducted there.

**Fact:** The training literature the school uses was developed by the Army Intelligence Center. Out of thousands of pages of text, only a few isolated phrases were construed as improper. No information contained in the questionable phrases has been linked to improper conduct by former students.

**Myth:** Training at the SOA does not include human rights instruction.

**Fact:** The school is the only military training institution in the United States that has mandatory human-rights instruction in every course. Each teacher is certified in human-rights training, and every student must successfully pass this training to graduate.

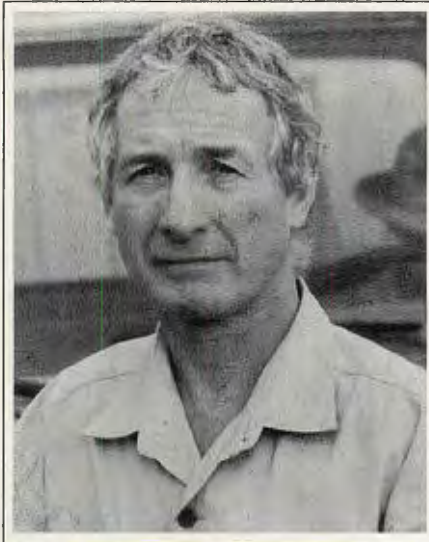
**Myth:** The SOA has not been investigated until recently.

**Fact:** The school has a standing Board of Visitors comprised of ambassadors, professors and human-rights attorneys who oversee the school's curriculum and who have constantly given it the highest marks.

Since its inception, the school has been regularly inspected. It's been gone over with a fine-toothed comb nine times since 1989. In every case, the school has been given a clean bill of health.

**Myth:** No one supports the SOA.

**Fact:** The school has tremendous national and international sup-



*Col. David Hackworth (Ret.) also writes a syndicated weekly column titled "Defending America." "Hack" doesn't pull any punches and many liberal rags won't carry his writing. If your local paper falls into that category, call the editor and let him know you'd like to see "Defending America" on the Op-Ed page. It's syndicated by King Features, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.*

port. The Department of State, Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey, major U.S. commanders, U.S. and Latin American ambassadors and the White House have given the school and its graduates a ton of "attaboys" over the years.

**Myth:** The controversy over the school is about the conduct of former graduates.

**Fact:** Any controversy is not over the SOA or the handful of former graduates who have been linked to human-rights abuses but rather about past and present U.S. foreign policy in Latin America.

Kennedy continues to cite El Salvador's civil war, apparently hoping to brainwash the American public to believe that the military and police forces were the criminals and the insurgents wore the white hats.

At every chance, this wrong-headed critic attempts to make the case that the communist guerrillas were the victims and are now the real heroes. Again, he is smoking — and inhaling — something not sold at the corner store.

**Myth:** The SOA has taught torture techniques.

**Fact:** The school has never taught torture. The school teaches only official U.S. Army doctrine which is current, continually updated, closely monitored and absolutely abides by the Geneva Convention.

**Myth:** SOA courses focus on killing.

**Fact:** The school instructs Latin American military, police and government officers in humanitarian, counter-narcotics and peace operations. Many of these courses are unique and aren't taught at other U.S. military bases.

Many countries in Latin America have serious internal problems. These conflicts will become further exacerbated as the gap between the "haves and have nots" widens and the drug-related issues increase.

The SOA allows the United States of America to cultivate good friends who hold or will hold critical positions throughout a region that's vital to the national security of America.

If Latin America is in trouble, so are we. In spite of what Kennedy says, the school is a strong asset, not an insidious Nazi-like liability.

[Http://www.hackworth.com](http://www.hackworth.com) is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

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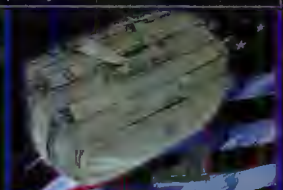
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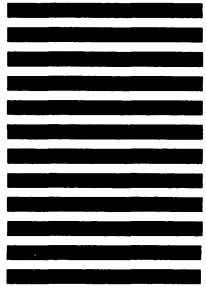
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